

10 tricks with Windows XP

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Network Administration - Windows XP is currently the most commonly used operating system today. Windows XP is produced by Microsoft for personal computers running on x86 and IA-64 processors. The name "XP" is a short form of "Experience".



The popular version of this operating system is Windows XP Home Edition, aimed at home users, and Windows XP Professional, providing some new features for the business. Windows XP is famous for its improved stability and performance compared to the 9x versions of Microsoft Windows.

Here are 10 small tips to help you customize some features of Windows XP:

1. Change the default open folder of Windows Explorer

By default in Windows XP, Explorer displays the My Documents folder with all subfolders.

In fact, this default display is not a problem, but you may not always open the **My Document folder** in **Windows Explorer**, but instead a different folder containing your working documents. The settings in **Windows Explorer Properties** you can choose to display which folders and can choose how to display them.

To open the **Windows Explorer Properties** dialog box, right-click the **Windows Explorer** icon. You can copy the shortcut of Windows Explorer (to the **Start All Programs Accessories** menu) to the desktop for easy operation. When the **Windows Explorer Properties** dialog box appears, select the **Shortcut** tab. To open a folder, simply change the link in the Target box of the Shortcut tab as follows:

C: windowsEXPLORER.EXE / n, / e, X: [Folder to open]

For example, if you want to open a folder called Working Folder in U: drive, enter the following path:

C: windowsEXPLORER.EXE / n, / e, u: Working Folder

After done, click **OK** . From now on, every time you open **Windows Explorer** , it will display your **Working Folder folder** instead of **My Documents** .

The above procedure displays the **Working Folder folder** and all subdirectories in it. However, you can use another tip to hide these subdirectories. You just need to add the **/select** command to the Target box:

C: windowsEXPLORER.EXE / n, / e, / select, u: working folder

You can apply this trick to the folders you want, you can create them with different icons and place them on the desktop or on the toolbar.

Inside:

1. **/ n** : Open a new window for each selected item.
1. **/ e** : Use **Windows Explorer** view. The **Windows Explorer** view is very similar to the **File Manager** in **Windows** version **3.x**. Notice the default view is **Open** .
1. **/ root** : Specifies the root level of the particular view. By default, use the standard root namespace (desktop). What is specified is the display root.
1. **/ select** : Specify which folders are prioritized. If you use the **/ select** command, the main folder will be opened and specific objects will be selected.

2. Set the default AutoPlay action for USB

This trick can be applied on both Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional.

If there is a USB drive that contains many different Microsoft Windows XP files, you can configure this USB drive to automatically open **Windows Explorer** instead of displaying the **AutoPlay** dialog box. You can also select **Open Folder To View Files In Windows Explorer** and select the box to select **Always Do The Selected Action** . If you do so, you can only configure the USB with a file type. To configure USB to open all file types in Windows Explorer, you can do the following:

1. Connect the USB to the computer

1. When you see the **AutoPlay** dialog box click **Cancel** .
1. Open **My Computer** , right-click the **USB** icon and select **Properties** .
1. In the **Properties** dialog box, select the **AutoPlay** tab.
1. Follow these steps for each item in the **Content Type** list:
 1. Select an item in the **Content Type** list.
 1. Select Next **Select An Action To Perform** in the **Actions** panel.
 1. Select the **Open Folder To View Files action in Widows Explorer** .
 1. Then click **Apply** .
 1. Click **OK** to close the **Properties** dialog box.

When you have completed the above steps, disconnect the USB from the computer. Wait a moment and then reconnect. After connecting you will see the **Autoplay** process appear immediately, then you will see Windows Explorer turn on and display all files and folders in the USB.

3. Add thumbnails to the folders in Windows Explorer

While working with a folder in the Windows operating system that contains lots of images, Windows often supports viewing small thumbnails of images displayed in Windows Explorer.

However, when this feature is enabled, the amount of operating system resources used will increase. These small images increase the free space on the hard drive and in memory when they are displayed. Depending on the system, the available resources, and the number of photos you can slow down the PC if you are not careful. (So ??this trick is also very useful for those who want to turn off the thumbnail creation mode in Windows).

Open **Windows Explorer** , here open the folder containing the images you want to see their thumbnails. In the **Windows Explorer** menu, go to **Tools Folder Option** to access **Control Panel** , select the **View** tab.

In the **Files And Folders area**, there is a **Do Not Cache Thumbnails check box** . If this checkbox is selected, no thumbnails will be saved on your hard drive. So if you want to archive it, you should uncheck it. Then click **OK** .

To start viewing small images, you must change the display in **Windows Explorer** . On the menu bar, click **View Thumbnails** , and Windows will replace regular file icons with thumbnails of those photos. Windows will also create a new file in that folder and name it **Thumbs.db** to store the information of the thumbnail. The **Thumbs.db** file will be created in each folder you install to display a small image.

To apply your own settings to every folder in **Windows Explorer** , go to **Tool** select **Folder Options** then click the **View** tab. Here, after you've done the settings, click the **Apply To All Folders** button before clicking **OK** .

4. Install Microsoft Management Console 3.0 on Windows XP SP2

This trick applies to both Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional operating systems but must install version SP2 or SP3. And before you use this tip, you should backup the risk prevention system.

The **Microsoft Management Console** (MMC) application provides users with a shell interface that allows you to insert multiple snap-in tools to create your own console. These consoles can help perform many tasks. The process of creating a console roll in the Windows XP version of MMC 2.0 is often very different.

Fortunately, Microsoft has introduced a completely new MMC interface for Windows Vista and Windows XP. The MMC 3.0 version supports more features for snap-ins than those versions and integrates a smoother user interface that makes it easy to create and use consoles.

One of the most significant improvements in MMC 3.0 for Windows XP is that it adds a completely new **Add Or Remove Snap-ins interface** . Instead of using a lengthy procedure consisting of two separate dialogs to create a separate console, the MMC 3.0 version provides a single dialog box that makes creating a console much easier.

Downloading and installing the MMC 3.0 version for Windows XP is quite complicated. However, you can manually activate the new user interface by adding a key to the **Registry** . Follow these steps:

1. Download **Microsoft Management Console 3.0** for **Windows XP** from **Microsoft Download Center** .
1. Run the executable file **WindowsXP-KB907265-x86-ENU.exe** to launch the installer of MMC 3.0.
1. After completing the installation, enter **regedit** in the **Run** box in the **Start** menu to run **Registry Editor** .
1. Go to **HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE SOFTWARE\MicrosoftMMC** .
1. Right click on the sub-key **MMC** and select **New Key** .
1. Name this new key **UseNewUI** .
1. Close the **Registry Editor** window.

Now, every time you run the **MMC.exe** executable file from the **Run** box, you can use the new **Add or Remove Snap-ins interface** . You just need to move the slider on the left panel (containing the existing console) and click the **Add** button to create the console in the right panel.

5. Copy the desktop theme to other Windows XP-based computers

You can apply this trick for Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional.

If you've created a favorite desktop theme and have to work on multiple computers (all use Windows XP), you can recreate the theme on other computers. However, manually re-creating on multiple machines will cost you a lot of time. You only need to follow the following steps to copy a Windows XP desktop theme to many different Windows XP computers.

1. On the computer that contains your favorite desktop theme, **right-click the screen** and select **Properties** . On the **Themes** tab, **select that theme** and then click the **Save as** button to save the theme as a file into the My Documents folder or any folder (assuming you save the theme with your **favorite** name).

1. Run **Windows Explorer** and access **My Documents** .
1. Find the **favorite** file (with **.theme** extension), locate the file and copy it to a removable drive (USB, memory card, .)
1. Then copy the **favorite.theme** file to the machines you want to apply.
1. Right-click the screen and select **Properties** to open the **Display Properties** dialog box.
1. On the **Themes** tab, click on the **Theme** drop-down list and select **Browse** .
1. In the **Open Theme** dialog box, browse to the **favorite.exe** file.
1. Click **OK** to download the new theme and close the **Display Properties** dialog box.

While Windows XP downloads a new desktop theme, you will see the **Please Wait** message in the middle of the screen.

The colors of the desktop will be changed when new settings are applied. Note, if you use components that are not available on Windows (like separate wallpapers, .) you need to copy them along with the file **favorite.theme** .

6. Retrieve information for multiple drives of Windows XP

This trick is used for Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional.

You can check the amount of free hard disk space and disk space used in Windows XP by right-clicking on the drive in the **My Computer** window and selecting **Properties** . In addition, there is another way to check and analyze the hard drive capacity is to use charts that describe this information in graphical form.

If your hard drive is divided into multiple drives, then executing this method on each drive may take a long time. But you don't have to worry about that because Windows XP supports the same pie chart that shows all the drives on multiple tabs of a dialog box.

1. Open **My Computer** .
1. Hold down the **Ctrl** key and select the drives you want to check for information.
1. Then right-click on one of the selected drives and select **Properties** .

The resulting dialog will have a tab containing a pie chart for each drive. You can apply this method to removable drives and even floppy drives.

7. Manage the list of commonly used programs in the Windows XP Start menu

This trick can be applied to Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional. Before applying this method, you should backup the system because it needs to change in the Registry.

One of the Start menu features in Windows XP is that it lists commonly used programs. However, Windows XP

only allows you to delete this list and change the number of programs in this list. This trick will show you another control that prevents some programs from appearing on this list.

For example, you might not want to display some apps like Calculator, Notepad, or games that you usually play, . displayed in this list.

To block an application from appearing in the list of applications commonly used in the **Start** menu, you simply need to add a **key** to the **Registry** . Do as follows:

1. Run **Registry Editor** .
1. Go to **HKEY_CLASSES_ROOTApplications** .
1. Right-click the **Applications** key and select **New Key** .
1. Set the key name similar to the executable file name of the application.
1. Right-click on the newly created key and select **New String Value** .
1. Name the **String Value** as **NoStartPage** .
1. Then close the **Registry Editor** window.

You need to restart the computer or at least Log off to apply those settings.

8. Put many applications into Win Tabber

This trick is used for Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional.

If you are using a browser that is capable of creating multiple tabs (like Firefox, IE 8, etc.), you will definitely see its convenience.

You may have worked with a variety of applications at the same time or on certain applications of the operating system, and you wish to have a tabbed user interface.

For example, you are working with multiple copies of Windows Explorer, and also working with multiple files and folders on your hard disk and shared drives on the network. You may be processing multiple text files that open several copies of Notepad at the same time.

Although the **Taskbar taskbar** is designed to function as an application converter by pressing **Alt + Tab** , it is much more convenient to open multiple windows on a separate tabbed interface.

Win Tabber integrates many free tools that allow you to easily convert multiple windows in a single user interface with multiple tabs. Once you have installed and operated **Win Tabber** , you can open multiple windows, and just one click of each window will be racing into **Win Tabber** .

Once included in the **Win Tabber** , each window will be in a separate tab and you can simply click on the tab to switch between windows.

9. Use images in 3D Flying Objects of Windows XP

This trick is used for Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional.

If you used Windows XP's **My Picture Slideshow** screen saver to display your favorite photos, you'll see **3D Flying Objects** is an interesting feature (allowing you to use a photo for the texture of 3D Flying Objects screen saver). You only need to do the following:

Determine the image you want to use in this screen saver, open it in a graphics program and save it as a **Bitmap** (.bmp) image. **Bitmap** is the only type of image that **3D Flying Object** allows to choose.

Right-click the screen and select **Properties** . Then select the **Screen Saver** tab, in the **Screen Saver** list select **3D Flying Object** .

1. Click on the **Settings** button and select **Textured Flag** from the **Style** list box.
1. Click on the **Texture** button and browse for the **Bitmap** image you just saved in the **Choose Texture File** dialog box.
1. Move the slider **Size** and **Resolution** to **Max** settings and click **OK** to close the **3D Flying Objects Setting** dialog box.
1. Click the **Preview** button to check the new screen saver, then click **OK** to apply it.

10. Configure Windows Explorer to display the disk of Windows XP

This trick is used for Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional.

When you double click on the My Computer icon in Windows XP, you will see all the drives on the system. However, when running **Windows Explorer** , only the files and subdirectories of the **My Documents folder** are displayed on the right panel. If you want **Windows Explorer** to display all drives like the **My Computer** window, do the following:

1. Right click on the screen.
1. Select **New Shortcut** .
1. Enter **C: WindowsExplorer.exe / n, / e, / select, C:** into the address box. Then click the **Next** button.
1. Enter **My Explorer** in the **Shortcut** name box and click **Finish** .

Now, when you open this new **shortcut** , a window will appear very similar to the **My Computer** window.

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