Nine Great Freeware Programs That Should be on Every PC

Ian "Gizmo" Richards

December 2010

This PDF file may be freely redistributed by websites, newsletters, blogs and other publications provided it is distributed in its entirety and without alteration and is not sold.

© Copyright 2010, www.techsupportalert.com

Foreword from Gizmo

All of us would like our PCs to run a little faster and to work a little better. We'd also like them to be safer to use.

The good news is that you can achieve these goals by using the nine utility programs in this guide. And you can do it without spending a cent, because every one of these programs is free.

The programs in this guide were chosen by me from the hundreds of outstanding freeware programs listed at Gizmo's Freeware. Most will work on all versions of Windows from XP through Vista including 64-bit systems. Exceptions are noted.

One of these programs is related to your PC security, two are to help with maintenance and the remaining six are productivity tools.

In this guide I'll show you where to get these programs, how to install them and how to use them.

Once you have them installed and set up, you're going to be very pleasantly surprised at the improvement in your PC performance and the effectiveness in the way you work.

But you can achieve much more. These nine programs are but a few of the thousands of outstanding freeware programs available from the Gizmo's Freeware website (www.techsupportalert.com). So do drop in and check out what are available.

Gizmo
Ian "Gizmo" Richards

PS Should you encounter any problems installing or using these programs, check out the help page at the end of this document.

Table of Contents

Program 1: Microsoft Security Essentials (Security) **4**

Program 2: CCleaner (Maintenance) **9**

Program 3: Auslogics Disk Defrag (Maintenance) **14**

Program 4: 7-Zip (Productivity) **19**

Program 5: EditPad Lite (Productivity) **23**

Program 6: PicPick (Productivity) **26**

Program 7: BullZip PDF Printer (Productivity) **32**

Program 8: PhraseExpress Boilerplate Text Manager (Productivity)) **36**

Program 9: PureText Format Stripper (Productivity) **40**

How to get Help **43**

DISCLAIMER: The content of this document is provided free of charge and in good faith for your general information and use only. It is subject to change without notice.

Neither we nor any third parties provide any warranty or guarantee as to the accuracy, timeliness, performance, completeness or suitability of the information and materials found or offered in this document for any particular purpose. You acknowledge that such information and materials may contain inaccuracies or errors and we expressly exclude liability for any such inaccuracies or errors to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Your use of any information or products referred to in this document is entirely at your own risk, for which we shall not be liable. It shall be your own responsibility to ensure that any products, services or information in this document meet your specific requirements.

This document may be freely redistributed by websites, newsletters, blogs and other publications provided it is distributed in its entirety, without alteration, in its original PDF format and is not sold.

© Copyright 2010, www.techsupportalert.com

Program 1: Microsoft Security Essentials *(Security)*

What it does

Microsoft Security Essentials (MSE) is an anti-malware scanner just like Norton Antivirus, AVG antivirus and other similar programs. It detects virus, trojans, keyloggers, rootkits and other malicious software products that have somehow managed to get on to your computer and will remove or neutralize them once they have been detected.

What's different about MSE is that it is from Microsoft and is free. Not only is it free it is remarkably effective. Furthermore unlike some other anti-malware programs it will not significantly slow down your PC.

For most average users MSE is a commanding first choice to protect their computers. Indeed for most users, it is all the security they will need to complement the firewall and other security measures that are built into Windows itself. Advanced and high risk users may however, want to consider additional security products. If in doubt consult the free Security Wizard at Gizmo's Freeware for suggestions tailored to your needs:

http://www.techsupportalert.com/secwiz

Installation

Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section.

Install the program by double clicking the downloaded file. For 32-bit Windows Vista and Windows 7 the download file is called mssefullinstall-x86fre-en-us-vista-win7.exe but this will differ slightly for different versions.

You will then see the welcome screen. Click "Next."

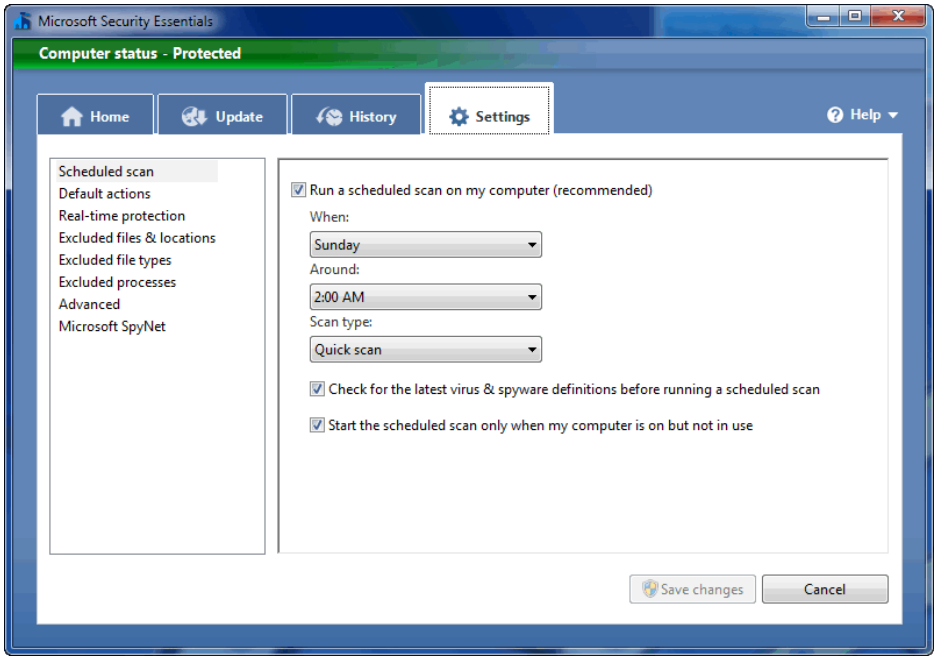
After the welcome screen is the license agreement. Read then accept.

On the next screen click "Install".

Once the installation is complete MSE will ask you whether to update its virus and spyware definitions database. Before you accept be aware that this can take a long time and may involve a big download.

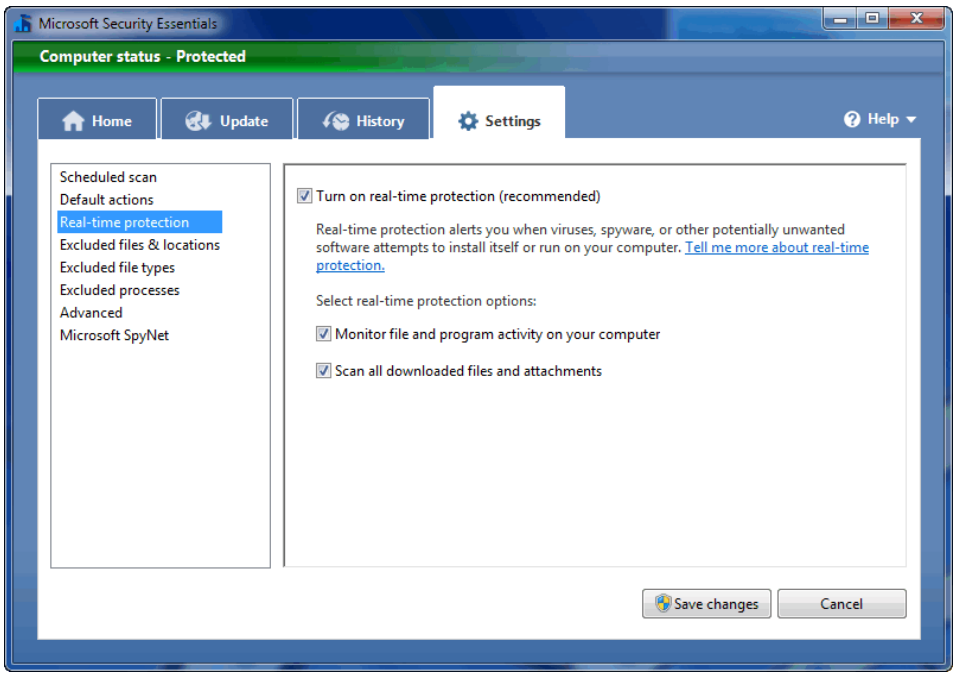
You can continue to use your computer while the download takes place but your internet access and computer performance could be slowed.

When the definitions update is complete you should configure MSE. Click on the "Settings" tab at the top of the MSE control panel and then click on "Scheduled scan" in the left sidebar. You will now see the default settings for automatic scheduled scans of your PC. Check that the times shown suit you – remember your PC needs to be turned on at the time the scan is scheduled.

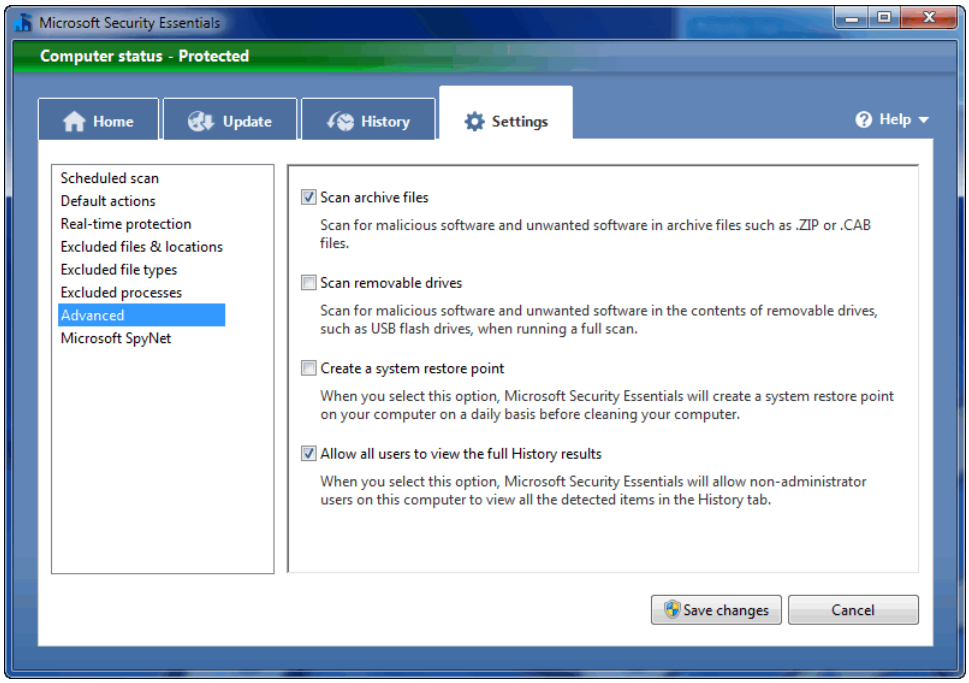


Weekly scans are fine for most users but I do suggest you change the scan type from "Quick scan" to "Full scan." A full scan takes considerably longer but it is a worthwhile security investment. Besides if you schedule a scan for the middle of the night it doesn't matter how long it takes as long as it is finished by morning.

When finished click "Save changes" and then click Real-time protection in the left menu. You should see a screen that looks like this with all boxes checked. If not then check the boxes and save.



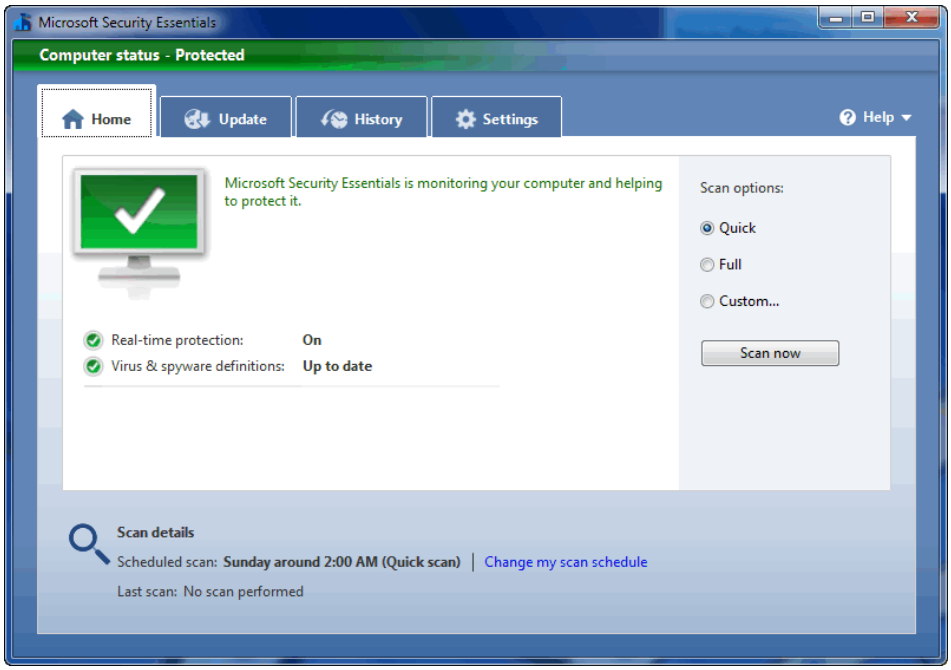
Finally click Advanced in the left menu and you should see a screen that looks like this:



Notice that "Scan removable drives" is unchecked. Most users would want to check this for additional security as some malware likes to hide on removable drives. The only exception would be if your

removable drives such as DVDs contain a huge amount of data. Here the time taken to scan this data is an issue you will need to consider.

Well that's it except for one last task. Click the Home tab and you now see something like this. Click the "Full" button rather the default "Quick" and then click "Scan now."



Once again be aware that this can tie up your computer for a long time. That's why many people chose to do their first full scan before they retire for the night.

Usage

MSE normally works invisibly so once configured there is little to see apart from the occasional message or alert. Updates take place automatically without any message and scans run invisibly unless a problem is detected.

This near invisibility alarms some people as they fear that MSE may not be working. This alarm is mostly unnecessary but you can always check on MSE's status by clicking the MSE desktop icon or running it from the Start Menu. The home screen will show you the last time the product was updated and the last time a scheduled scan ran. Any malware detections can be found in the History tab.

Invisible or not, MSE provides outstanding protection for your PC. Combine MSE with safe computing practices and the chances of your PC getting infected are minimal.

Microsoft Security Essentials

Website: http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials/
Download Page: http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials/
Author: Microsoft
Current version: as at Dec 2010 - 1.02
Download File size: 12.4MB (Win7 32-bit)
License: Free for home use and commercially for up to 10 PCs. Only works on genuine Windows systems.
Operating systems supported: Windows XP/Vista/Win7
Additional Software Required: None
64 Bit version available: Yes – see download page
Portable version available: No
Non-English languages supported: Many
Other relevant information: None
Alternative programs: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-anti-virus-software.htm

For more useful freeware programs visit **Gizmo's Freeware**
(www.techsupportalert.com)

Program 2: CCleaner *(Maintenance)*

What it does

CCleaner is a cleanup program that removes unnecessary files from your PC. This frees up disk space, allows your PC to work more efficiently and also removes a potential privacy risk.

These unnecessary files are created on your computer as temporary files or working files by Windows itself, or by other programs you use, such as your internet browser. These files are not essential and can be safely removed.

CCleaner will also optionally remove files that contain private information that you may not want others to see on your PC. A simple example is your browser history file which records all the websites you've visited. Another example is the names of the movie files that you've recently opened in your media player.

Some folks don't want others to see this information; CCleaner gives you the option of erasing this historic information from your PC. And it's not just for your browser and media player. CCleaner can remove private information that is stored in more than a dozen commonly used programs, including Firefox and Opera.

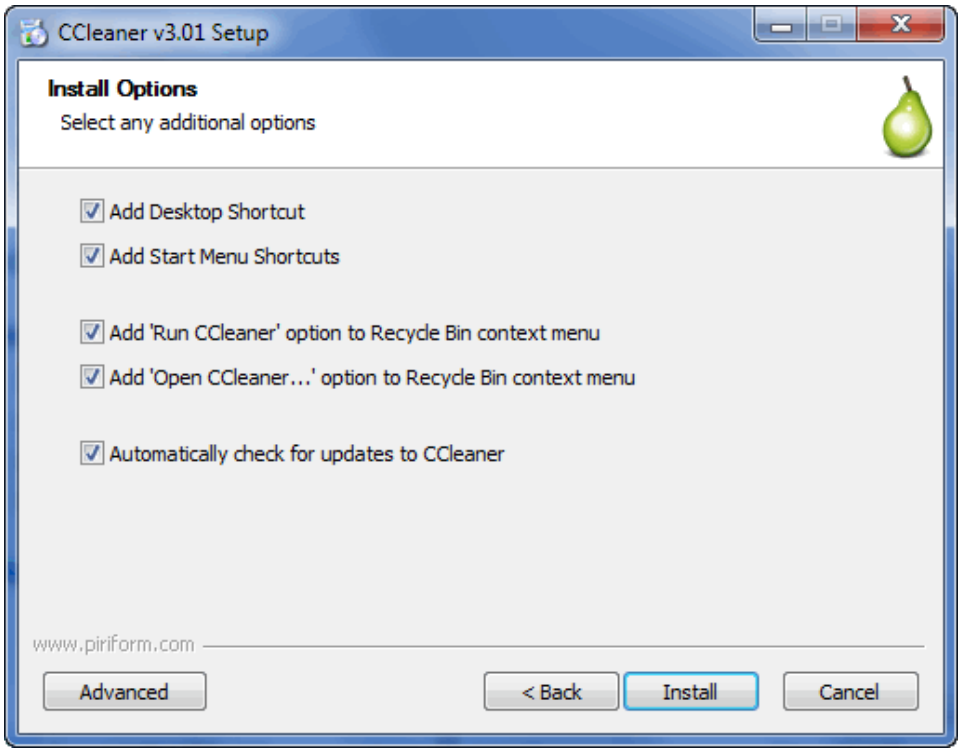
Installation

Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section. Run the setup program by double clicking the file "ccsetup301.exe".

Select "English" as the language and click OK to start the setup wizard.

Read and agree to the licensing agreement.

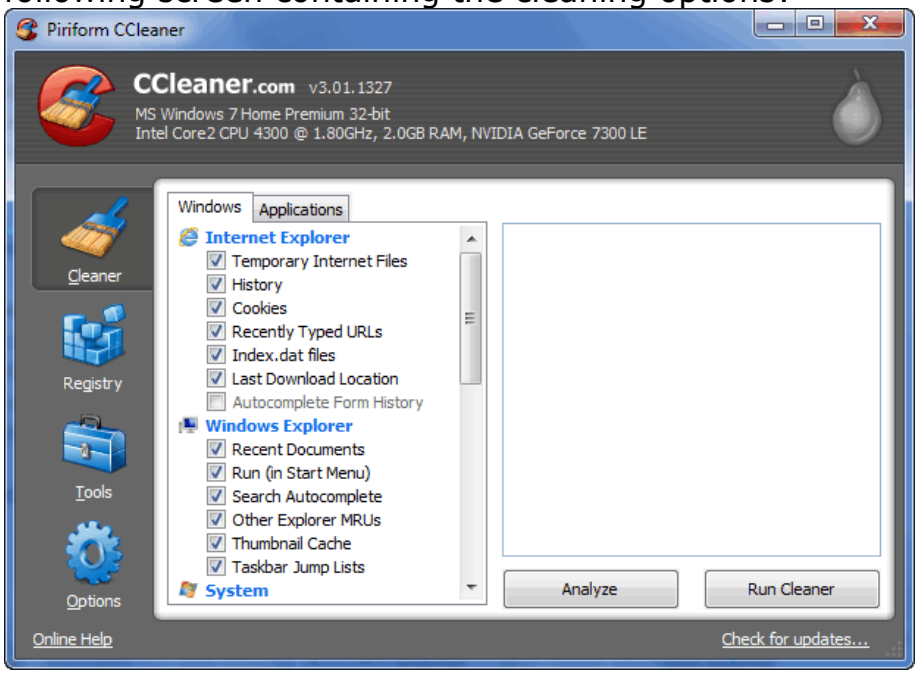
Accept the default location for the installation file. You should now see a screen listing the installation options that looks like this:



Just click "Install" and you're finished.

Usage

Double click the CCleaner icon on your desktop. This will bring up the following screen containing the cleaning options:



Mostly you can just accept the default options, but if you are particularly concerned with the privacy issues, you may want to check some or all of the unchecked boxes as well.

Before you do, just be aware that your browsing and program history will become irretrievable, and that may be inconvenient. For example, I consult my internet browsing history a lot, and I also find that my browser's web address auto-complete feature is very handy. Both of these features will be lost if you erase all stored browser information by checking all unchecked boxes.

And a word of warning: Don't check any of the unchecked boxes in the "Advanced" section.

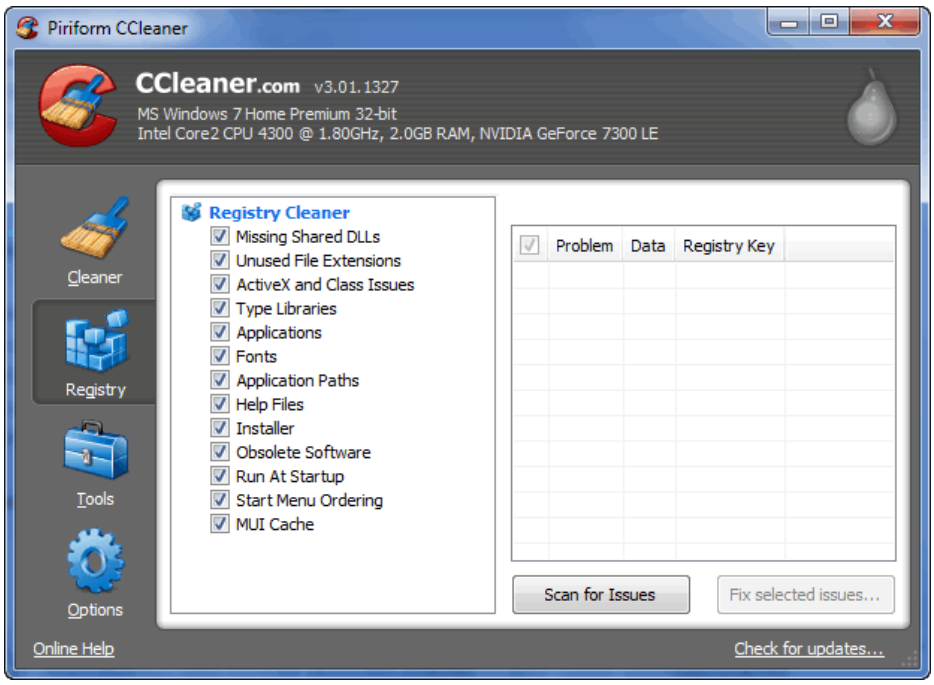
Once you've set your required Windows cleaning options, click on the "Applications" tab and select the cleaning options for the programs on your PC. Again, most of us can safely accept the default values, although those of us with extreme privacy requirements may want to check more boxes. My warning in the preceding paragraphs also applies here.

Once this is done, click on the "Analyze" button at the bottom of the CCleaner screen. This will show you which files will be deleted using the cleaning options you've selected. It will also show you the amount of disk space that will be freed when you delete these files. If you're happy with this, press the "Run Cleaner" button at the bottom of the screen, and the listed files will be deleted.

Now, one final step: As well as cleaning out unneeded files, CCleaner will also clean up the Windows Registry. It's not the most sophisticated or thorough registry cleaner that's available, but it's a very safe cleaner and that's a good thing.

If you don't use a separate registry cleaner, I suggest that you use CCleaner to sort out any major issues with your registry.

To use CCleaner's registry cleaning function, click the "Registry" icon in the left hand toolbar. You will see the following screen:



Don't change the default cleaning options. Click the "Scan for Issues" button at the bottom of the screen. Once the scanning is complete, click the "Fix All Selected Issues" button. CCleaner will give you the option of creating a backup and you should accept this option. Note the name and location of the backup file. If your computer is not functioning correctly after the registry cleanup you can restore the registry to its original condition by double clicking the backup file.

Once you have saved the backup file, click the "Fix All Selected" button and you are finished cleaning your PC.

I recommend that you clean your computers' hard drives at least once a month. Those of you who have serious privacy concerns should clean your PC each time you use it.

CCleaner

Website: http://www.ccleaner.com/
Download page: http://www.ccleaner.com/download
Author: Piriform Ltd.
Current version as at Dec 2010:3.01
License: Freeware
Download File Size: 2.83MB
Operating Systems Supported:
Win9x/Me/NT4/2000/2003/XP/Vista/Win7

Additional Software Required: None
64 Bit version available: No, but runs on 64 bit systems
Portable Version Available: Yes - http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner/builds
Non-English languages supported: Many
Other relevant information: None
Alternative programs: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-file-cleaner.htm

For more useful freeware programs visit **Gizmo's Freeware**
(www.techsupportalert.com)

Program 3: Auslogics Disk Defrag *(Maintenance)*

What it does

When you store information on a hard disk drive your data may not be stored in a single location. Instead it may scatter over many different locations on the surface of the disk.

This process is called file fragmentation. Fragmentation slows down the rate at which your computer can read and write data to your hard drive because the magnetic heads that read and write the data are forced to jump all over the surface of the disk.

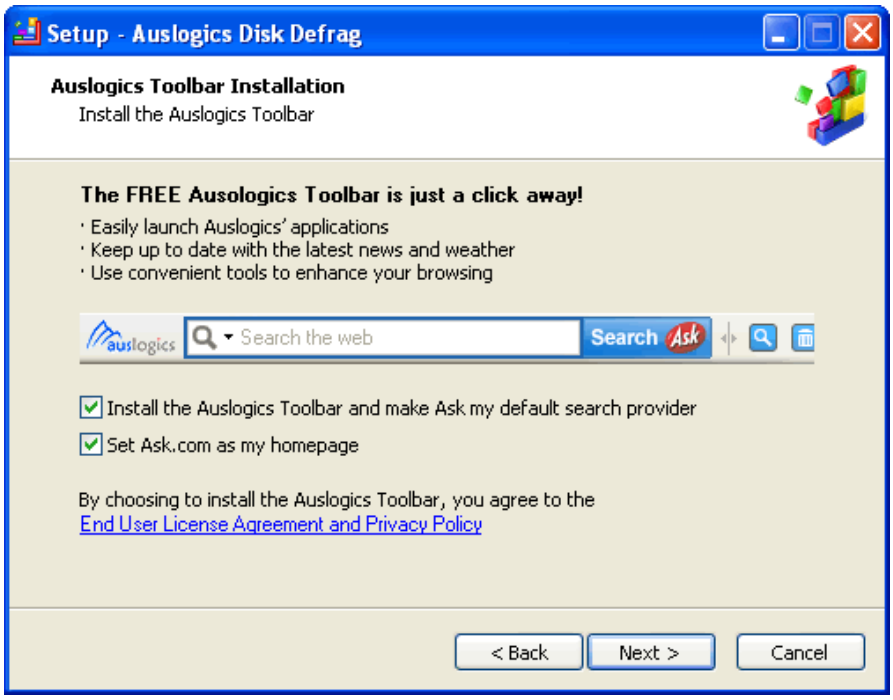
When a disk drive is new and contains little data, there is hardly any fragmentation. However, fragmentation rapidly builds up as your disk drive fills up, particularly if you add and delete a lot of files.

Windows comes with a disk defragmentation utility and you can use it to reduce the degree of defragmentation on your drives. However, it's not a particularly effective defragmentation program; it's slow to run and prone to freezing during the defragmentation operation.

Instead I suggest you use Auslogics Disk Defrag for hard drive defragmentation. It's one of the fastest programs of its type and it's extremely easy to use. Sure there are other programs such as MyDefrag with more options and more complex defrag algorithms but for average users Auslogics Disk Defrag is hard to beat.

Installation

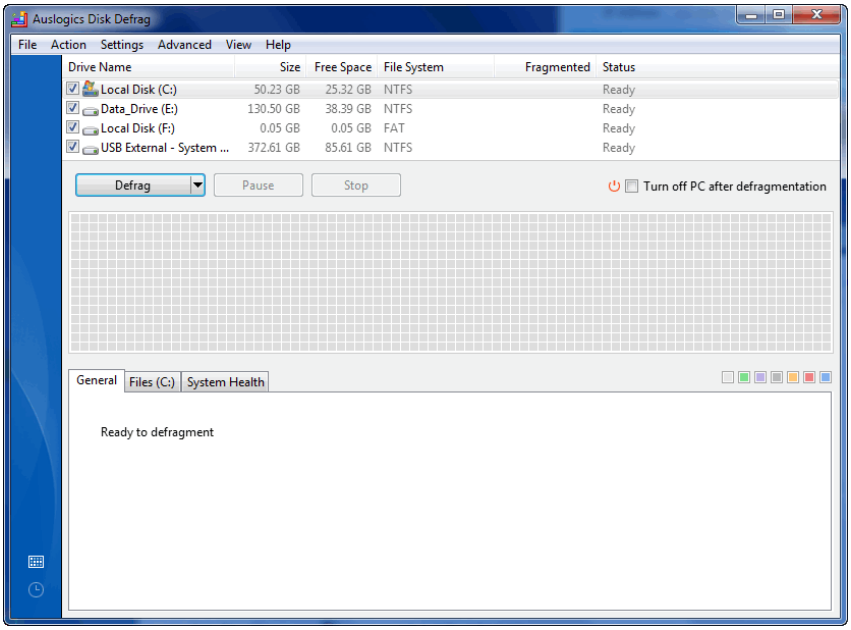
Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section. There is no need to enter an email address. Locate the download file disk-defrag.exe and double click it to start installation. Click "Next" on the Welcome screen and then accept the license. On some versions you may see a screen asking you install the Auslogics Toolbar and set Ask.com as your homepage. If you encounter this I suggest you uncheck both options unless you really want them.



Keep clicking "Next" until the installation is completed.

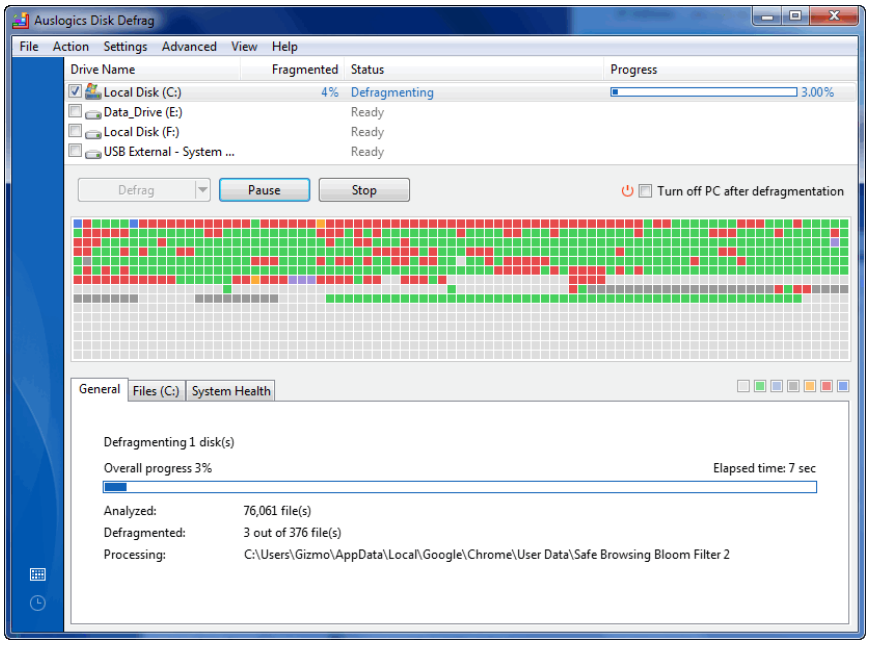
Usage

To start the program, double click the Auslogics Disk Defrag desktop icon. You will then see a screen that looks like this:



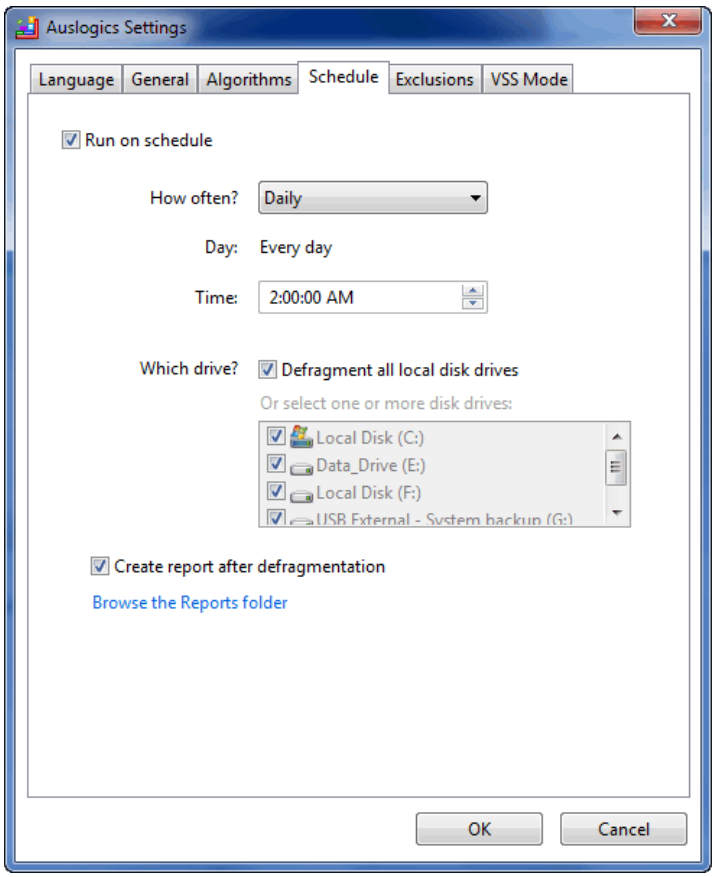
All most users need to do is to just click the "Defrag" button. Note that defragmenting all your drives may take hours so I suggest you run the defrag after you've finished using your computer for the day. I do it as the last thing before I go to bed. When I wake up my computer is fully defragged and ready for a full day's work.

While defragmenting each drive, Auslogics Defrag shows you its progress in the form of a disk map like this:.



The map shows you the degree of fragmentation and you can see it improve as the defragmentation progresses. The red areas indicate sections of your disk that contain fragmented files, the green indicates no fragmentation while the blue are formerly fragmented areas that have now been defragmented.

Auslogics Disk Defrag allows you to schedule future defragmentation sessions so they happen automatically. You can set this from Settings/Program settings/Schedule.



To enable scheduling, check the "Run on schedule" box and select a convenient time for the defrag to take place. Remember your PC must be switched on with Windows running at the time of the scheduled defrag otherwise it will not take place.

Tips

1. It is a good idea to always run CCleaner before you defragment your disk drives. That way the disk space recovered by CCleaner can be consolidated by the defragmentation program.

2. If you want a more thorough defragmentation and are prepared to accept a much longer defragmentation time in order to achieve this then select Action/Defrag and optimize from the menu.

3. Most users will experience a useful speed improvement the first time they defragment their disks. Subsequent defrags have less benefit. Most users need only defragment their disks monthly as more frequent defrags have little benefit but increase the wear on your hard drive.

4. Don't be tempted by the option in Auslogics Disk Defrag under Advanced/Optimize your computer. It's only an attempt to sell you additional products. There's a similar upsell under the System health tab.

Auslogics Disk Defrag

Website: http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/disk-defrag/
Download page: http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/disk-defrag/
Author: Auslogics
Latest version as at Dec 2010: 3.1
Download file size: 4.4MB
Portable version available: Yes - http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/disk-defrag/#portable
License: Free for home users
Operating systems supported: Windows XP/2003/Vista/2008/Win7
64-bit version available: No but will run on 64 bit systems.
Other languages supported: French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Traditional Chinese
Additional software required: No
Alternative programs: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-disk-de-fragmenter.htm

Program 4: 7-Zip *(Productivity)*

What it does

This program is an archiver and works in a very similar way to the commercial archiving program WinZip. That is, it can compress files into smaller archive files and can uncompress files that are already in an archive file.

7-Zip can create and unpack ZIP archives exactly like WinZip. Besides the common ZIP format, it can also handle a number of other archive formats including some formats that WinZip can't handle, such as the 7z format.

So use 7-ZIP wherever you would use WinZip. It performs much the same and doesn't cost a cent.

Note: Windows does have a basic zip utility built in but it is very limited in the type of archive supported and much less flexible than 7-Zip.

Installation

Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section.

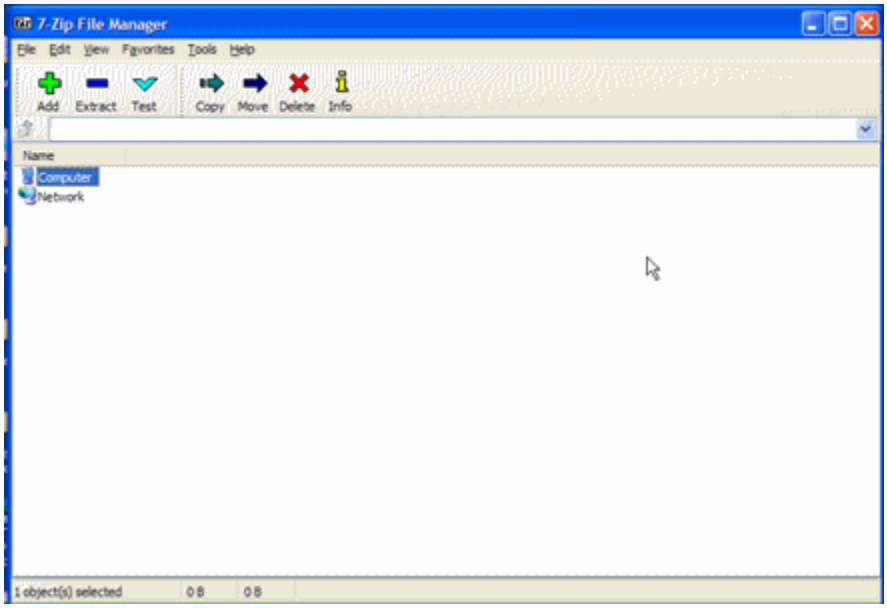
Double click the installation file "7z920.exe".

Accept the default download location and click "Install." When installed, click "Finish."

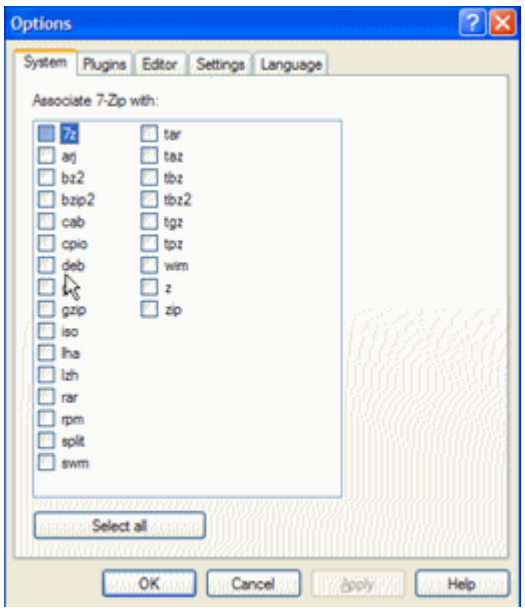
Usage

When you install 7-Zip it doesn't create a desktop icon. Rather it creates an entry in your Start Menu.

Go to the Start Menu and select all Programs/7-Zip/7-Zip File Manager. You will then see a control panel that looks like this:



From the menu at the top, click on "Tools/Options." You will now see this panel:



This is a list of file types that you can associate with 7-Zip. When you associate a file type with 7-Zip then any time you double click that file type it will automatically open 7-Zip.

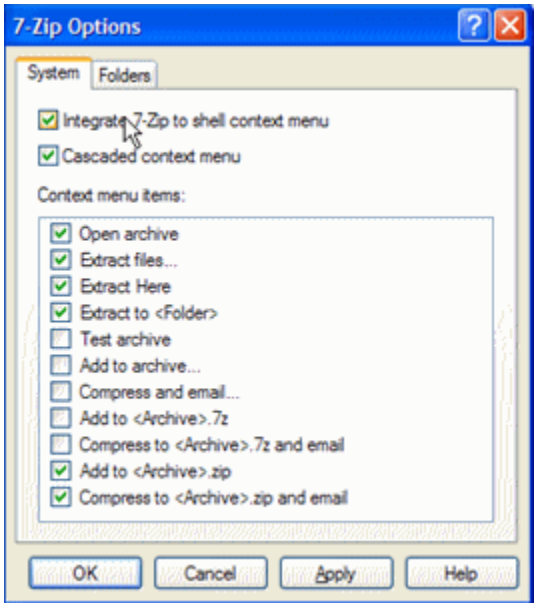
For example, if you check the box next to “zip” then 7-Zip will be associated with ZIP files. Double clicking a ZIP file will then automatically open the file in 7-Zip.

Unless you have another archiving program already installed, such as WinZip or WinRAR, I suggest you check all the boxes. You can do this by pressing the "Select all" button at the bottom of the panel. Then click "OK."

The installation also creates a mouse right-click context menu. So to compress a file you can just right click the file and select "7-Zip/Add to archive."

Unfortunately, 7-Zip adds several context menu items specifically related to the special 7z archive format. Most of you will never use this format so I suggest that you remove the 7z options from the context menu. This is easily done:

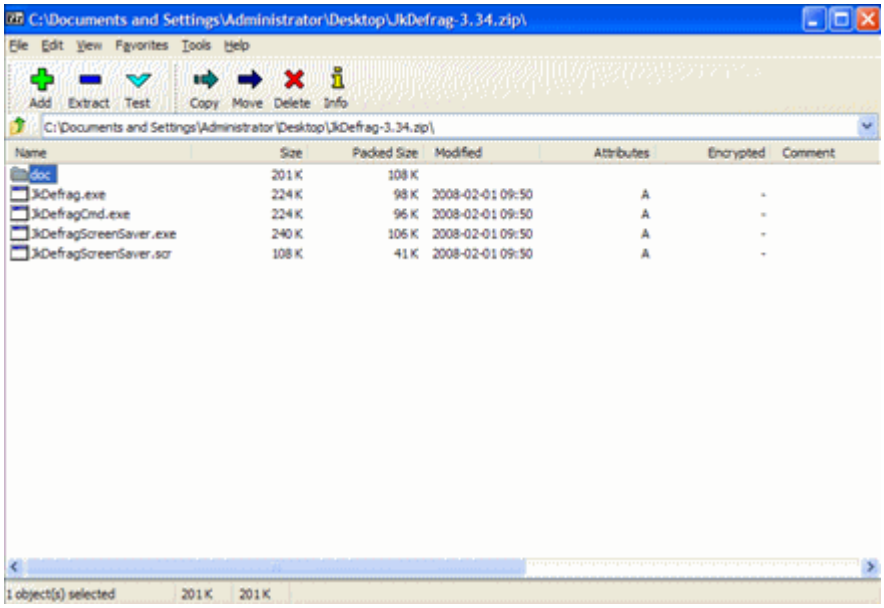
While in the options menu select the Plugins tab. Click the Options button next to 7-Zip. In the next panel uncheck all the options relating to the 7z archive format . The panel should look like this:



Then click "OK" twice to exit the options panel.

7-Zip is now set up and is ready to use.

To open a ZIP archive, just double click the ZIP file. You should then see a panel similar to the following, although the files you see inside the archive will be different:



You can extract a file by dragging and dropping the file with your mouse or by using the "Extract" option in the top toolbar. You can add a file to the archive in a similar manner.

Zipping a file is easy. Let's say your file is called myfile.doc. Just right click the file and select "7-Zip/Add to myfile.zip." Simple as that!

7-Zip

Website: http://www.7-zip.org/
Download page: http://www.7-zip.org/
Author: Igor Pavlov
Current version as at Dec 2010: 9.2
Download file size: 1.0 MB
License: 7z.dll: GNU LGPL and unRAR restriction, all other files: GNU LGPL
Operating systems supported: Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP/Vista/Win7.
Command line version for Linux/Unix.
Additional software required: None
64 Bit version available: Yes – see download page
Portable version available: Yes, at http://portableapps.com/apps/utilities/7-zip_portable
Non-English languages supported: Yes
Alternative programs: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-file-archiver-zip-utility.htm

Program 5: EditPad Lite *(Productivity)*

What it does

EditPad Lite is a plain text editor and a direct replacement for Notepad that comes with Windows. But this is more than a replacement: it's a huge upgrade.

First, it has tabs so you can open several documents at the same time. Second, it can handle huge files without freezing like Notepad. Third, it has unlimited undo. Fourth, it has block functions so you can save parts of your text to disk or insert a file in the current text. Fifth, it can convert text to uppercase, lowercase, invert case, initial caps and more. Sixth, it can run as a portable program from your USB Flash drive. If that's not enough to convince you then check out the full feature list here: http://www.editpadpro.com/editpadlite.html

Installation

Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section.

To install the program double click the file "SetupEditPadLite.exe" that you downloaded.

Select the "No-Questions-Asked" installation option.

Read and agree to the licensing agreement.

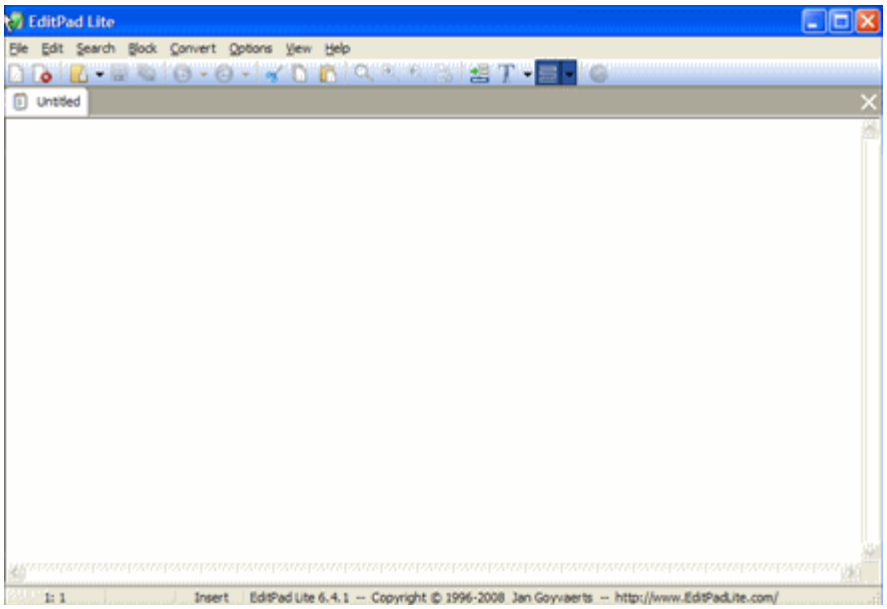
The installation will now complete automatically.

Usage

When you install EditPad Lite it creates a desktop icon. Double click the icon to start the program.

The first time you start EditPad Lite it will ask if you want to associate text files with EditPad Lite. Select the "Yes" option. That means that EditPad will now substitute for Notepad and open automatically when you double click a .txt file and other plain text file types.

Once you have selected the file association options you will see a screen similar to this:



Using EditPad Lite is similar to using Notepad except you have many more features and many more options.

Load a text file into EditPad Lite and play around. Once you've used EditPad Lite you'll never want to go back to plain old Notepad again.

EditPad Lite

Website: http://www.editpadpro.com/editpadlite.html
Download page: http://www.editpadpro.com/editpadlite.html
Author: Just Great Software
Current version as at Dec 2010: 6.6
Download file size: 3.1MB
License: Free for non-commercial use
Operating systems supported: Windows NT4/98/2000/ME/XP/Vista/Win7
Additional software required: None
64 Bit version available: No but runs on 64 bit systems
Portable version available: Yes - http://www.portablefreeware.com/?id=521
Non-English languages supported: Yes
Other relevant information: None
Alternative programs: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-text-editor.htm

For more useful freeware programs visit **Gizmo's Freeware**
(www.techsupportalert.com)

Program 6: PicPick *(Productivity)*

(May not work on 64-bit systems)

What it does

Although it does other things, PicPick is principally a screen capture utility. It allows you take a screenshot of whatever is being displayed on your monitor and save it as graphics file. Alternatively, you can send it to your printer.

Windows includes a basic screen capture facility that can be accessed by pressing the PrtSc key on your keyboard. It's an all-or-nothing affair with no option to capture just part of the screen or to send the output to different types of graphic file such as GIF or JPG.

PicPick allows you to capture the full screen, active window, window control, rectangular, fixed or freehand region. Best of all it supports auto-scroll which means you can capture long web pages that take up more than one screen. Output formats include BMP, JPG, GIF and PNG. Furthermore, it will automatically name and number the output files using a file-naming system that you determine.

As well as being an outstanding screen capture program, PicPick also functions as a basic image editor, color picker, color palette, screen magnifier, pixel ruler, protractor, crosshair and even whiteboard. Most users will not use these extra features but they are there should they ever be required.

Best of all it works simply by pressing the PrtSc key, so there's nothing to remember. This is truly a program that should be on every PC. Indeed, every screen shot in this guide was taken using PicPick.

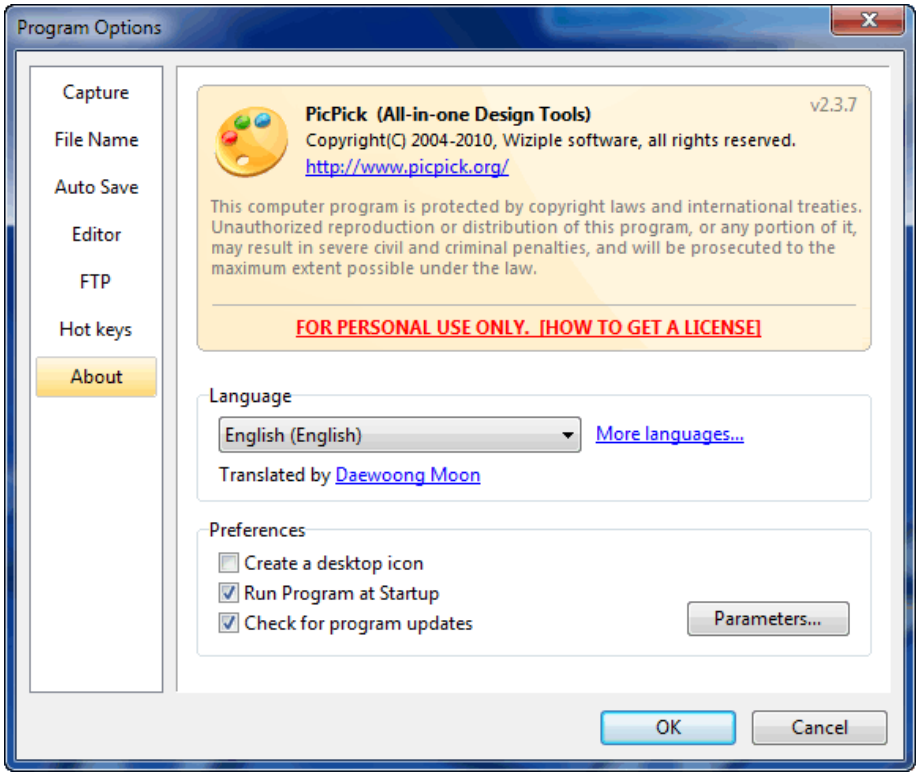
Installation

Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section.

Double click the file "picpick_inst.exe" that you downloaded.

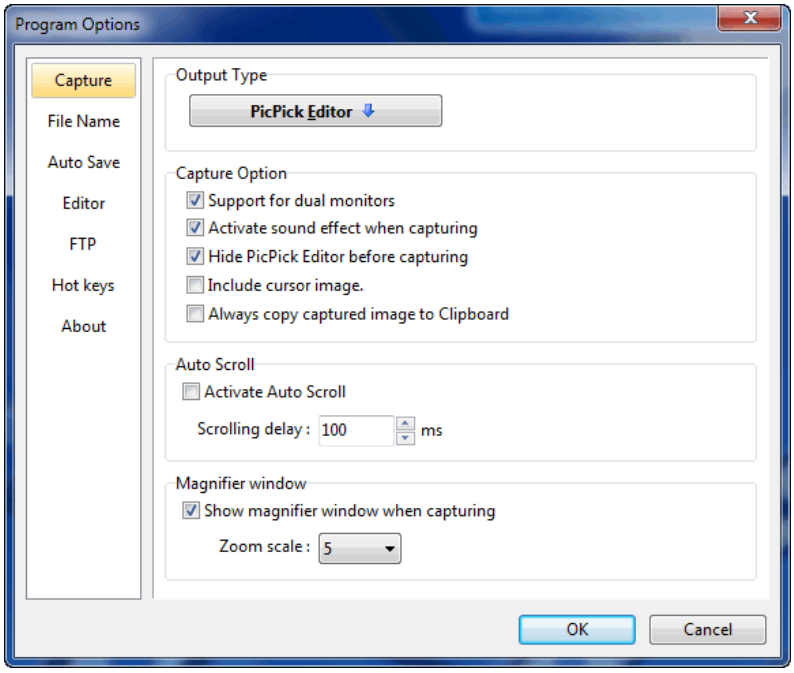
Keep clicking "Next" until the installation completes. When completed your browser will be launched and display the PicPick license page. Note the license terms and close the browser.

If PicPick doesn't start automatically then click your Windows Start Menu button and click the PicPick icon. If you can't see it then select "All programs" and locate it there. You should now see the following screen:



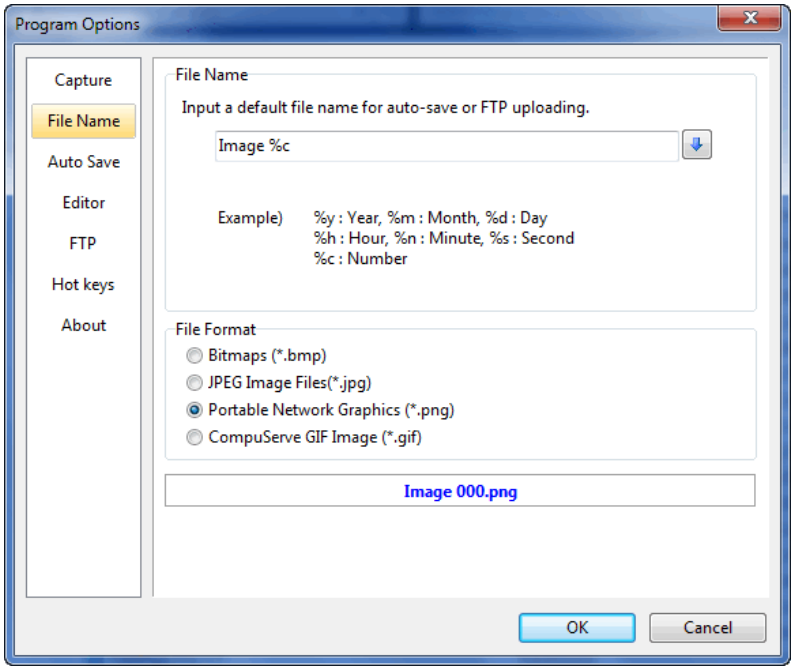
You should now click on each of six configuration screens, Capture through to Hot Keys listed on the left side of the panel. Generally you can accept the default values but there are some values you will almost certainly want to change.

The first of these is on the Capture panel. These are the default values:



Most users would want to uncheck the "Support for dual monitors" box and check the "Activate Auto Scroll" option.

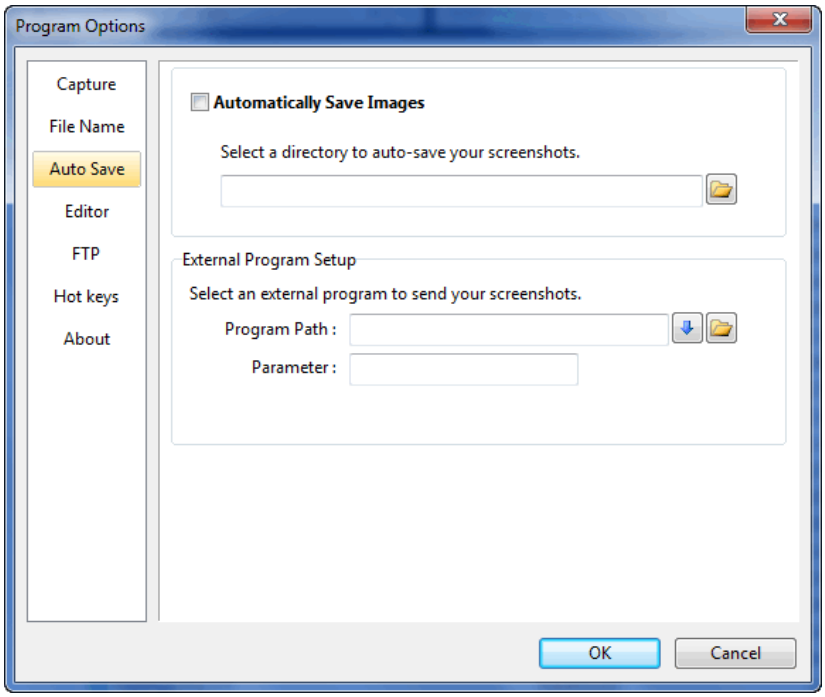
Next you should look at the File Name panel.



You can change the automatic file name system from the default image001, image002, etc., to any name you want including the time and date. I just use the default.

In the section below the file name template you can also change the output image file default format from .png to .gif, .bmp or .jpg. You are not locked into this, however, as you can change the format when you save the file after taking a screen shot.

Another important configuration item is in the "Auto Save" panel.



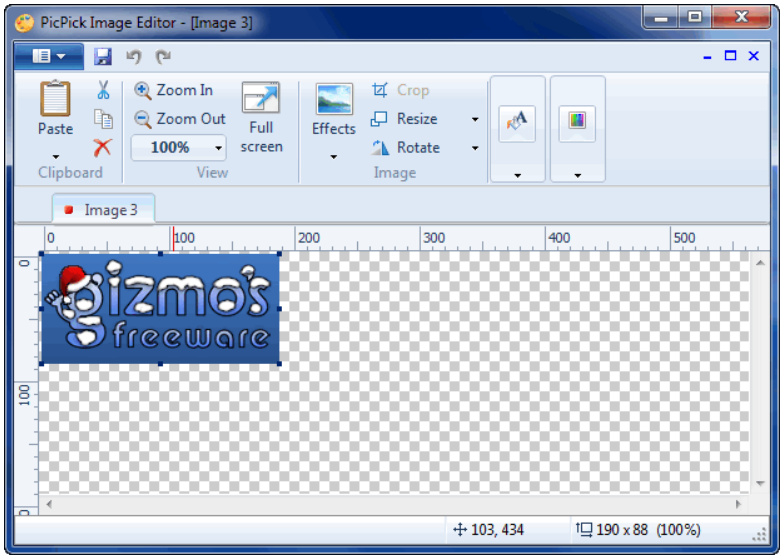
If you want PicPick to automatically name and save screenshots you should check the box "Automatically Save Images" and enter the name of the folder where you want your images to be saved.

Finally, check out the Hot Key Assignments and check if the default values suit your needs. You don't have to remember these Hot Keys as you can always select whatever kind of screen capture you want by clicking the PicPick icon in the system tray.

Usage

Usage couldn't be simpler. Just bring up on your screen whatever you want to take a screen shot of, then hit a PicPick hotkey to take the screen shot. Alternatively click the PicPick tray icon to select the screen shot you want.

If you configured PicPick to autosave then the screen shot will be taken, automatically named and saved to the folder you nominated. Otherwise the screenshot will come up in the PicPick editor like this:



You can then crop, annotate, resize and edit the image to suit your needs and save it in whatever standard image format you require.

Most people will simply want PicPick to autosave and autoname their screenshots rather than individually edit and name each shot. If you failed to setup autosave during configuration you can do it at any time by clicking the PicPick tray option and selecting "Program options."

PicPick

Website: http://www.wiziple.net/
Download page: http://picpick.wiziple.net/download
Author: Daewoong Moon
Current version as at Dec 2010: 2.3
License: Free for personal use
Download File size: 3.37MB
Operating Systems Supported: Windows 98/Me/2000/XP/Vista/Win7
Additional Software Required: None
64 Bit version available: No but some people have found the 32 bit version works fine while others have had performance problems.
Portable Version Available: Yes - http://www.portablefreeware.com/?id=1496

Non-English languages supported: Many
Other relevant information: None
Alternative programs: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-screen-capture-utility.htm

For more useful freeware programs visit **Gizmo's Freeware**
(www.techsupportalert.com)

Program 7: BullZip PDF Printer *(Productivity)*

What it does

The BullZip PDF Printer allows you to create PDF documents from virtually any Windows application including Word and Excel.

The program installs as a virtual Windows printer. Creating a PDF document file simply involves "printing" to the BullZip virtual printer from the application you are using.

There are a number of similar programs but I have selected BullZip because of its reliability and outstanding set of features. These include: PDF password protection, encryption, watermarking, file appending / prepending, metadata editing and, most importantly, the ability to choose different levels of output quality.

The only downside with BullZip is that it requires the free Open Source program "Ghostscript Lite" in order to operate. However this is a feature of many free PDF writers, not just BullZip. Ghostscript Lite is downloaded automatically as part of the BullZip installation process.

Installation

Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section.

Unzip the file you downloaded to your desktop. The ZIP archive contains only a single file "BullzipPDFPrinter_5_0_0_609.exe"

Double click the EXE file to start the installation.

Select English as the language and press "OK" and then "Next."

Read and accept the licensing agreement and then click "Next."

Accept the default installation folder and then click "Next."

Accept the default Start Menu shortcut name and then click "Next."

Check the box "Create a desktop icon" and then click "Next."

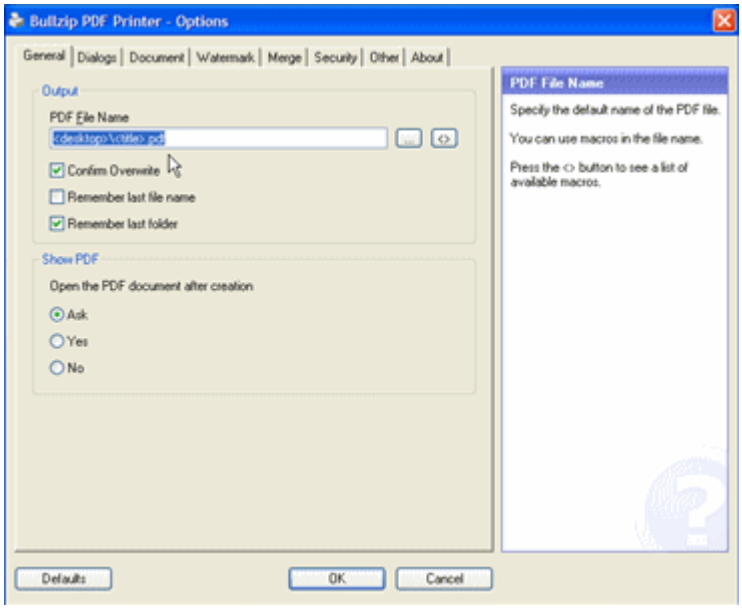
Check the box "Download and install Ghostscript Lite" because this is needed by BullZip in order to function correctly.

Click the "Install" button and, when the installation completes, click the "Finish" button.

Installation may take a few minutes because the five-MB Ghostscript Lite program needs to be downloaded.

Usage

Double click the BullZip icon on your desktop to bring up the BullZip options control panel.

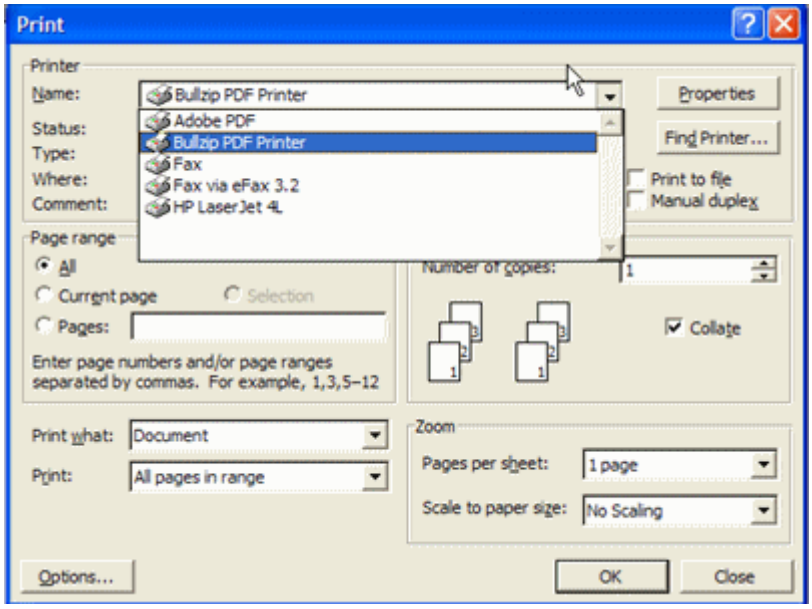


You can use this control panel to change default quality settings, password protection, encryption, etc. Most of you will not want to change the default setting unless you have special needs. That's because almost all these setting can be changed at the time you create your PDF files.

Close the options control panel and let us now create a PDF document.

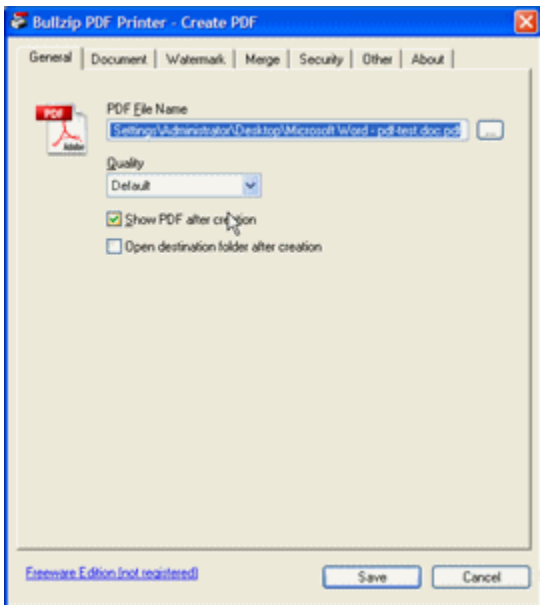
Open Microsoft Word or whatever program you use for creating documents. Open an existing document in the program and we will create a PDF file from this document.

Select File/Print and you will see that BullZip PDF is now one of the printers available:



Select BullZip PDF Printer from the list of available printers and click "OK."

Now an "options" panel will open:



At this point you can select PDF quality, watermarking, password protection and other PDF features as required. You can also prepend and append PDF pages to your PDF document.

Click "Save" and in a few seconds your PDF document will be created and saved in the location you nominated.

BullZip

Website: http://www.bullzip.com
Download page: http://www.bullzip.com/products/pdf/info.php
Author: Bullzip.com
Current Version as at Dec 2010: 7.1
Download File Size: 4.3 MB
License: Free for personal use and commercial use up to 10 users
Operating Systems Supported: Windows 2000/XP/2003/Vista/2008/Win7
Additional Software Required: Ghostscript (download link provided on their website - free under GPL license)
64 Bit Version Available: No, but program will run on 64 bit systems.
Portable Version Available: No
Non-English Languages Supported: Many
Alternative programs: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-pdf-writer.htm

For more useful freeware programs visit **Gizmo's Freeware**
(www.techsupportalert.com)

Program 8: PhraseExpress Boilerplate Text Manager

(Productivity)

PhraseExpress allows you to store commonly used phrases and insert them into your e-mail, documents and other programs. For example, rather than typing "We have received your order," you can select the phrase from a list, press a hotkey or type a brief shortcut text command, and then it will be automatically inserted without you having to type the whole thing.

This is immensely useful; it saves me at least 30 minutes a day.

PhraseExpress's feature list is impressive: it has no limit to the number of insertion items; it allows multi-line inserts; it can handle nesting of inserts within inserts; it allows the insertion of names, dates and other variables within inserts; it allows abbreviations to be automatically expanded, and more.

It also allows you to launch a program or go to a web page instead of inserting text, and that's really handy.

Also handy is the built-in auto-correct feature similar to the one in Microsoft Office. It automatically fixes common typing errors like "and" instead of "nad". Unlike the Microsoft version, it works in any program, not just Office.

Phrases can also be inserted by assignable hotkey or by automatic expansion, i.e. abbreviations you type like "BTW" can be automatically expanded to "by the way."

Installation

Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section.

Double click the file “PhraseExpress.exe” that you downloaded to start the installation.

Select English as the language and press “OK” and then “Next.”

Read and accept the licensing agreement and then click “Next.”

Accept the default installation folder and then click “Next.”

Accept the default Start Menu shortcut name and then click "Next."

On the additional task panel, I suggest that you uncheck the "Do you want to use PhraseExpress on a network" option because the free version will not work on a network. You may also want to uncheck the "Run Data Import Wizard" option unless you have a pre-existing file of standard phrases that you want to import. When you've finished selecting options, click "Next."

Click the "Install" button and, when the installation completes, click the "Finish" button.

During the install, it is possible that your security program might warn you that PhraseExpress contains a keylogger and is monitoring your keyboard. Well, it is monitoring your keyboard (because this is how the program works), but it definitely does not contain any keyloggers. You can safely ignore the warning.

Usage

At the end of the installation, PhraseExpress gives you the option of viewing a tutorial in your browser. You should do this because the tutorial is excellent and not too long. Watching the tutorial is the best way to learn how to use the many clever features of this product.

Many folks won't use all these clever features but will just use the basic boilerplate text capability. Setting up your boilerplate text is easy. Here's how:

First write your boilerplate text, select it and copy it to the clipboard.

For example, let's say your boilerplate text consists of the following:

Thanks for your enquiry. I have enclosed a brochure giving a full description of the product.

Also enclosed is our price list showing volume discounts.

Should you need any more information please feel free to email me.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Blogs
Sales department

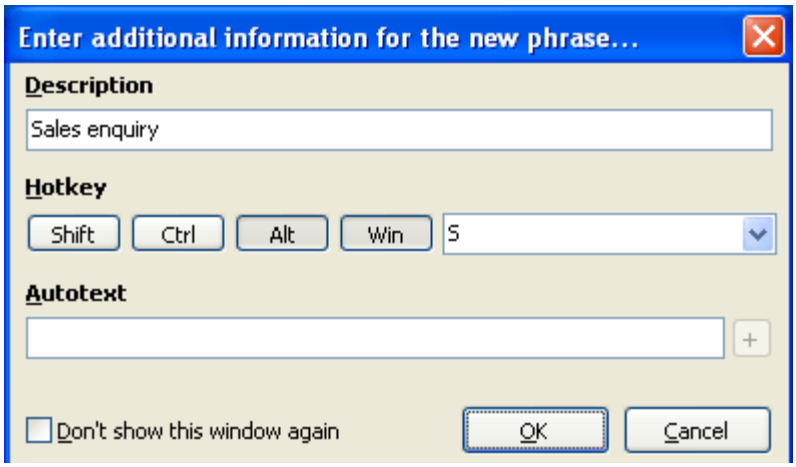
Select all of this text with your mouse then use Ctrl C to copy it to the clipboard.

Click on the PhraseExpress tray icon and the following menu will pop up:

Select "Create new phrase."

Enter a short mnemonic description for the boilerplate item for example "Sales enquiry".

Optionally, enter a keyboard shortcut for the boilerplate phrase. In this example I have selected Alt Win S. You don't have to use a hotkey or keyboard shortcut; you can optionally select your boilerplate text from a list or use a special key phrase.



Click "OK" to save your phrase.

To use your boilerplate text just position the cursor wherever you want the letter to start and press Alt Win S and the boilerplate text is inserted immediately.

You can insert boilerplate text in email, word processing documents, spreadsheets, web forms or any other place you can type from the keyboard.

It's an enormous time saver, so do try it.

PhraseExpress

Website: http://www.phraseexpress.com
Download page: http://www.phraseexpress.com/download.htm
Author: Bartels Media
Current Version as at Dec 2010: 8.0
Download size: 4.31MB
License: Free for personal use
Operating Systems Supported: XP/Vista/Win7
Additional Software Required: None
64 Version available: No but will run on 64 bit systems.
Portable Version Available: Yes, see USB version on download page
Non-English languages supported: None
Other relevant information: None
Alternative programs: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-boilerplate-text-manager.htm

Program 9: PureText Format Stripper *(Productivity)*

(May not work on 64 bit systems)

PureText is the simplest of the nine programs in this guide, but for many of you it will be the most useful.

All PureText does is to remove unwanted formatting from text that you are copying from one location to another.

For example, let's say you want to copy some text from a website page into a Word document using Windows copy and paste. Almost certainly you will end up pasting the font and other formatting information from the web page into Word as well as the text. This will badly mess up the layout of your Word document.

With PureText you would copy the webpage text in the normal manner but paste into the Word document using a hotkey. I use F10 on my PC but you could use any key you like.

When pasted with PureText, the information in the clipboard is copied as plain text with all formatting removed. So when you insert it into Word it will have the same font size and type face you were using immediately before the insert. This of course is exactly what you want.

Installation

Download the program using the download link at the bottom of this section.

Unzip the file "puretext20_x86.zip" that you downloaded to your desktop. It only contains one file: PureText.exe.

Double click PureText.exe.

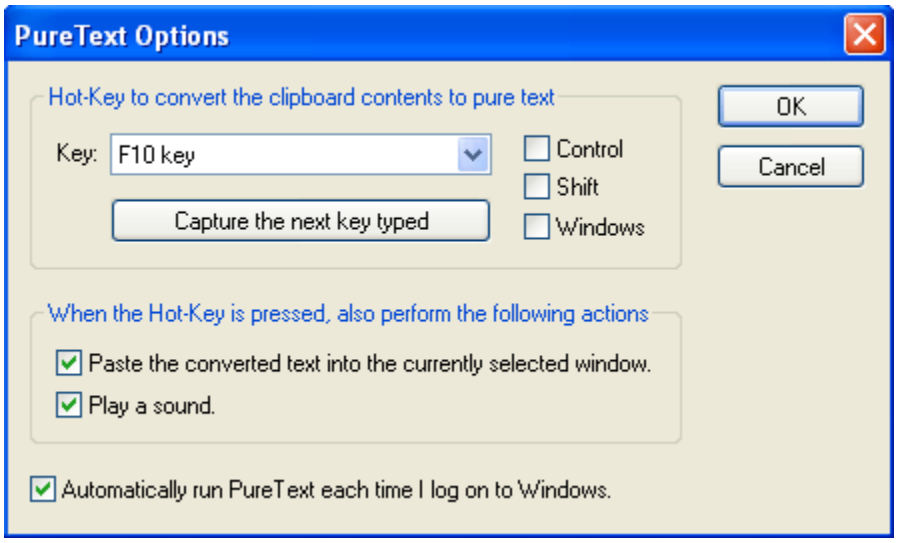
That's it. PureText is now running! I told you it was simple.

Usage

First we need to configure PureText.

Right click on the PureText icon in the system tray and select "Options."

The "Options" control panel will now display. Here's how I've configured my version of PureText. You can use the same options or adapt them to meet your needs.



Click "OK" to save and exit.

Now try copying some formatted text from a website. Once copied, paste it into Word or an HTML email using the PureText hotkey. Voila! No pesky formatting.

This is a great program but it does have some limitations. PureText only removes rich formatting from text. As the website says "It will not remove or fix new-lines, carriage returns, tabs, or other white-space. It will not fix word-wrap or clean up your paragraphs."

That limitation aside, this is a program you will use and appreciate every day. And it consumes so few resources that you won't even notice it's running.

PureText

Website: http://www.stevemiller.net/puretext/
Download page: http://www.stevemiller.net/puretext/
Author: Steve Miller
Version: 2.0
Download size: 13KB
License: Freeware
Operating Systems Supported: NT/2K/XP/2003/Vista/Win7

Additional Software Required: None
64 Bit Capable: No
Portable Version Available: No but standard program will run from a USB stick
Non-English languages supported: None
Other relevant information: None
Alternative programs: StripMail, http://www.dsoft.com.tr/stripmail/

For more useful freeware programs visit **Gizmo's Freeware**
(www.techsupportalert.com)

How to get Help

Should you encounter any problems installing or using these programs then feel free to post your problem to the Gizmo's Freeware Forum. It's a free service and you will find the folks there to be friendly and helpful.

To post to the forum:

1. Register at the address below. It's free and immediate.

http://www.techsupportalert.com/user

2. Go to the Freeware Usage Forum at http://www.techsupportalert.com/freeware-forum/freeware-installation-and-usage/

3. Click the "New thread" button on the left hand side of the page. Enter a subject in the title box and your question in the message area. Finally click the "Submit new post" button at the bottom of the message and you are done.

To see the answers to your question you will need to revisit the forum later. Most questions are answered within 24 hours but some tough problems may take longer.

This PDF file may be freely redistributed by websites, newsletters, blogs and other publications provided it is distributed in its entirety and without alteration and is not sold.

© Copyright 2010, www.techsupportalert.com