

# UnderstandIT

From **MAY DAY CONSULTING LIMITED** in association with **FACILITATORS UK**

A publication designed to inform and enable businesses to understand the implications, costs and advantages of using Information and Communications Technology. Distributed through Chambers of Commerce.

## **MICROSOFT TO LAUNCH INTERNET EXPLORER VERSION 7 FOR XP**

Contrary to previous statements by Microsoft, it would appear that the company is planning to produce a major update to Internet Explorer, but only for Windows XP, and only for installations with Service Pack 2 (SP2) installed.

It had originally stated that any new version of the browser would be incorporated only into its next generation operating system (code-named Longhorn) due to be released in 2006.

Many in the IT industry feel (perhaps cynically) that Microsoft is responding to the surge in interest in the new Mozilla Firefox browser. Firefox has now been downloaded by an estimated 25 million users, and significantly hit Microsoft's share of the Internet browser market.

It is not entirely clear (based on Bill Gates statement at the major RSA security conference in San Francisco last month) exactly what will be different in Version 7, but many believe it will attempt to address the issues surrounding "phising" and may copy some of the features of Firefox, which includes faster displaying of graphics and pictures, and support for multiple browser windows using tabs.

Unfortunately, there will be no help for users of Windows 2000, Windows 95/98 or ME, since the new version will depend totally on new code that only came with Windows XP SP2.

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## **NEW GOVERNMENT SECURITY INFORMATION WEB SITE - ITS SAFE**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, the government launched a new web site that is designed to provide a range of services, principally to the business community, but also to home computer users.

The site is at <http://www.itsafe.gov.uk> and it offers alerts, bulletins, newsletters, and to registered users, a mobile sms (text) alert service warning of new viruses discovered or other urgent security information. The site also provides an extensive glossary, useful high-level "How to..." guides and a library of previously issued e-mail advisories and newsletters.

Some might say that this site duplicates information available from other sources, but in the increasingly security conscious IT world, all such advice and information is welcome.

## **IMPROVED AUDIO-VIDEO SYNCHRONISATION WITH MSN MESSENGER**

Microsoft's messaging portal MSN has announced that they will be incorporating much improved synchronisation of audio and video streams in the new version of their Messenger software (Version 7). The improvements follow co-operation between MSN and Logitech (a major manufacturer of webcam hardware). The new facility will provide synchronised voice and video at the touch of one button, and is aimed at those using broadband Internet connections.

With the current version, the audio and video communication aspects of MSN Messenger are separate, and there are major problems with the synchronisation of both streams. For those businesses that are now using instant messaging services for communication internally or with customers or suppliers, this should bring significant improvements, providing your broadband service is fast enough.

The new version of MSN Messenger is expected "in the spring".

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## **SECURITY STILL A MAJOR WEAK LINK**

A recent survey by IT security company SafeNet reveals that IT security is still very weak in a majority of businesses. The survey covered over 60,000 global businesses and showed that most were struggling to convince users of the importance of security.

The main security loopholes relate to the use of passwords to access computer systems. The survey revealed that 50% of users write their passwords down and 33% actually share them!

Many companies had introduced policies relating to best practice when using passwords – increasing the minimum password length, and requiring more frequent changing of passwords. However, this inevitably exacerbates the situation, since many users claim to have difficulty remembering more complicated and increased number of passwords required in their daily business activities. This inevitably results in them committing them to paper!

One tip for handling the need to frequently change your password(s) is to use a combination of alpha and numeric characters, and to change one digit in the password at a time. Unfortunately, until more robust biometric access systems are produced, this could be an ongoing problem for most of us!

## FOLDER SECURITY – HIDING SENSITIVE FOLDERS FROM VIEW

In last month's edition, we talked a little about how to apply security attributes to folders on a Windows XP computer to ensure that users sharing the system can protect sensitive information from each other.

In a similar vein, this month we will cover how to take the folder security a step further, by actually hiding folders containing sensitive information from view.

Firstly, as system administrator, you should follow the procedures described in last month's piece to apply the appropriate attributes to the folder or folders in question. You then need to apply the HIDDEN attribute to the folder(s) by following these steps:

1. Launch Windows Explorer and highlight the folder concerned.
2. Right-click on the highlighted folder and select the Properties menu item, then select the GENERAL tab as shown below in Figure 1.

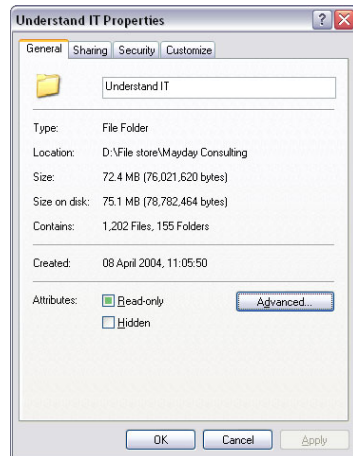


Figure 1

3. At the bottom of this dialogue box, there is a check box marked HIDDEN. Check this box and hit the APPLY button. The folder will now have the "hidden" attribute.

To ensure that the folder is in fact hidden from view, you need to make sure that Hidden or System folders are actually hidden from view, since this option can be switched on and off.

To check this, select the TOOLS menu Windows Explorer and the FOLDER OPTIONS item. The dialogue box in Figure 2 will appear. Check whether the radio button against the DO NOT SHOW HIDDEN FILES AND FOLDERS item is selected or not. If it is not, then select it and hit APPLY.

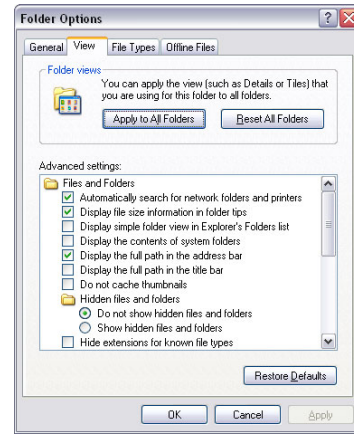


Figure 2

Hit the OK button and exit Windows Explorer. Next time you launch Windows Explorer or My Computer. The folder concerned will no longer be listed.

This attribute can be applied to individual files as well as folders if you require.

## MS WORD – APPLYING CAPTIONS TO PICTURES OR GRAPHICS

You will notice in the last article that the two graphics have captions. These are applied using the Word captions feature.

To apply a caption to a picture or graphic, follow these steps:

1. Select the picture (so that it has a black line around it and selection "handles" for re-sizing it).
2. Select the INSERT menu and CAPTION from the REFERENCE menu item. The following dialogue box will result:



3. From here, you can select the type of caption and whether it is inserted above or below the picture. You can also set or re-set the automatic numbering or even apply an automatic caption. Automatic captions are inserted whenever you insert a particular type of object.

This is a simple, but often over-looked tool from the many facilities available within Word.

We wish to acknowledge with thanks that some of the material contained within this publication has been sourced from Computer Weekly.

May Day Consulting Limited and your Chamber of Commerce have endeavoured to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, but do not accept liability for any inaccuracy or omission contained within it.

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