

UnderstandIT

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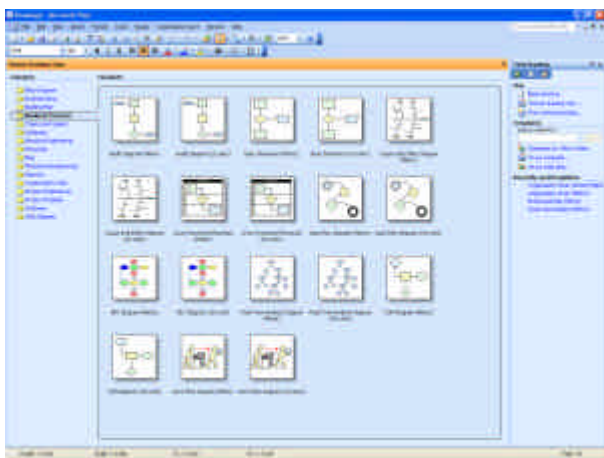
MICROSOFT VISIO – AN INTRODUCTION

We often provide hints, tips and “how to...” articles about the mainstream components of Microsoft’s Office suite of products. However, we rarely stray into some of the other components of the suite – Powerpoint, Access, Frontpage and Visio. This month, we provide a very brief introduction to Visio which we hope you will find informative, and perhaps encourage you to look closer at what is an excellent product.

Visio is a graphical drawing program that uses pre-defined shapes that can each be manipulated in many ways (enlarged, reduced, distorted in any direction etc.). Some of the pre-defined shapes are 2-dimensional, with others being 3-dimensional in nature. Each shape, and a plethora of different “connectors” has “smart connection points that can be made to “snap” to each other and “glued” in that position if you so wish.

You can therefore construct complex shapes and diagrams and move elements around, with the connectors remaining attached to the components of the shape. Any number of components within a created shape can also be “grouped” and moved or modified as a single shape, and then “ungrouped” when appropriate.

When first launching Visio, you are asked to define the category of drawing you wish to create. You can then select one of a number of sub-categories – see example screen-shot below (showing different types of Business Process sub-categories):



This process results in the setting up of the workspace with the default set of templates (each one containing many pre-defined shapes relating to the selected type of drawing).

The top-level of categories include the following:

Block diagram	Map
Brainstorming	Mechanical Engineering
Building plan	Networking
Business Process	Organisation Chart
Charts and Graphs	Process Engineering
Database	Project Schedule
Electrical	Engineering Software
Flowchart	Web Diagram

The initial basic drawing page is blank, but with a pre-defined grid that is used to line up components of the drawing on the page. This grid can be re-sized or switched off if you so wish. Whether shapes are forced to “snap” to the grid can also be turned on or off.

Before beginning the drawing, you can specify the page size (this normally defaults to A4), margin sizes and any scaling (default is 100%).

Creating the basic drawing involves selecting appropriate shapes and connectors from the available templates and dragging and dropping them on to the page. They can then be enlarged or re-positioned at will. Place-holders for text labels are provided for each shape.

As with other, more complex drawing packages, a drawing can consist of a number of “layers”, each one laid on top of the others. This allows you to assign certain shapes to a specific layer. For example, if you are creating a building plan, you can assign the building structure to one layer, the electrical and plumbing detail to a separate layer, and furniture to a third layer. You can then edit, view or print layers separately.

Some of the more advanced features of Visio include the ability to:

- Create organisation charts automatically from a database of names and titles (stored for example in an Excel spreadsheet)
- Create a logical diagram from an existing web site, by analysing the structure of the site.
- Create a logical diagram of a computer database by using a similar technique, or alternatively create a database from a logical diagram previously created in Visio.

There are also a myriad of customised shapes, templates and other sources of information at various locations on the Internet. Some of these shapes and templates are free, whereas other, more complex ones are only available from the creator at a cost.

This is, of necessity a very brief introduction into the wealth of features available in this excellent software component of Office. If you require more in-depth knowledge of Visio, please contact Alan Finch on 01224-697457 who can provide more help.

WINDOWS START-UP – REMOVING UNWANTED PROCESSES

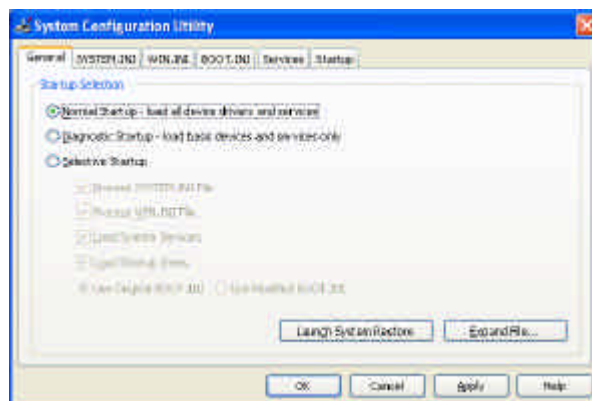
If you have ever installed new software on your computer, you may find that as part of the install routine, the software has included some additional, unwanted software. The same may be true if you download software from an Internet site. Sometimes these additional programs are designed to pop-up windows that contain adverts for products or services.

Be aware, particularly if the software you have installed or downloaded is “free”, that this will often mean that the provider has included some advertising to defray the cost of his product. You may then be bombarded with unwanted advertising material in the form of these annoying pop-up windows.

It is not always easy to uninstall these interlopers from your system, as they often bury themselves deep within Windows. However, there are some places to look for them and hopefully allow you to remove them. The places to look include:

1. Add or Remove Software facility within Control Panel. This is the place to go to remove software that you have installed and which has correctly been registered within Windows. It is unlikely that these unwanted pieces of software will appear here, but it is worth checking first. If it does, then use the Change/Remove button to uninstall them.
2. Windows Startup folder. This appears under the START button and PROGRAMS. Look for the STARTUP folder in the list of programs. If the culprit is lurking there, then you can right-click on the menu item in question and hit DELETE to remove it from the Startup Folder. However, this just removes the shortcut from the startup folder. It does NOT remove the offending program from your system.
3. Windows Configuration. When Windows starts, it executes a number of processes that set up Windows to function correctly, and to load any

programs required at startup. These processes can be seen, and modified, by using the Microsoft Configuration utility (msconfig). If you are unsure about what you should do here, then call in some expert help to ensure that you do not do anything that will interfere with the correct operation of Windows. To run msconfig, go to START and RUN. In the RUN box, type msconfig and hit the OK button. This will bring up a multi-tabbed dialogue box as shown below:



Do not touch the SYSTEM.INI, WIN.INI AND BOOT.INI tabs – these contain important parameters for Windows and to make any changes may stop Windows running correctly. However, the SERVICES and STARTUP tabs may contain a reference to the offending program(s). If they do, then you can disable them by removing the check mark to the left of each entry by clicking on the check box.

If none of the above steps reveal the offending program, then the final step involves editing the Windows Registry. This is NOT recommended for those who are unfamiliar with the registry. It would be wise to call in a professional to look at your registry and to make any necessary changes to remove the offending program. In any event, the registry should be backed-up before any changes are made to it, to ensure that you can always revert to a fully working version of the registry, should anything go wrong.

If you require any professional advice or assistance with any of the above, then call Alan Finch on 01224-697457.

SPAM increasing; Viruses a constant threat? Now is the right time to review your Business recovery plan. Ask yourself the following three questions:

- 1 Have you got a plan?
- 2 Are your manual systems robust enough?
- 3 Is your plan tried and tested?

If the answer is No to any of them, then call MAY DAY CONSULTING on 01224-697457 and ask for Alan Finch.

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.

Information on other Business and IT services can be found on our web site at: <http://www.maydayconsulting.co.uk> or by calling Alan Finch on 07968 262079.

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