

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.

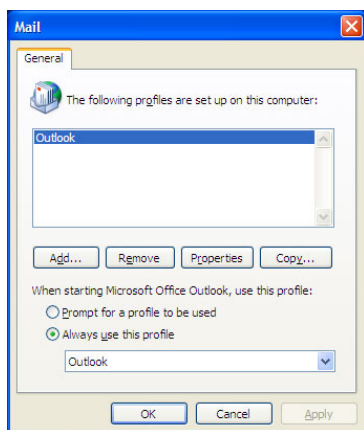
MS OUTLOOK PROFILES

Microsoft Outlook enables you to manage your own email mailbox locally on your own computer, rather than using one of the many “free” web-based email systems. However, if your computer is used by more than one person, it is clear that using the same Outlook mailbox to store and manage mail from multiple users is not very efficient nor secure, since all incoming mail would be deposited into the one mailbox.

You could, of course, create a separate Windows account (if you are using Windows 2000 or XP) and thereby have separate mailboxes for each Windows account user. This is probably the more effective and secure way of handling this situation.

However, Outlook also has a Profiles feature that can be used for this situation. It might also be useful if you are using the computer, say for both business and personal use. By using a profile, you can effectively run two (or more) mailboxes separately with different accounts, email addresses etc for each profile.

To use the feature, you first have to enable the use of profiles. This is done externally to Outlook itself. Simply go to the MAIL icon in CONTROL PANEL. You will be presented with a Mail Setup dialogue box which includes SHOW PROFILES. Select this button and the next panel will show the default profile called OUTLOOK.



The box marked “Always use this profile” will be checked, since you will by default be using this profile.

In order to create a new profile, click on ADD, and type in the name of the new profile, and click OK. You will then go to the E-mail accounts wizard that allows you to create the email account or accounts that you wish to use under the new profile. A new mailbox will then be set up for the new account(s).

When completed, go back to the Mail Setup dialogue again, select SHOW PROFILES. Then make sure that the PROMPT FOR A PROFILE TO BE USED radio button is checked.

In future, whenever you launch Outlook, you will be prompted to select which profile you wish to use. Sent and received mail, and all other Outlook components (Contacts, Calendar, Tasks etc.) will be available independently.

WHY DOES YOUR COMPUTER TAKE SO LONG TO BOOT?

Many of us have invested in a brand new computer, whether it be for use in the office, or at home, principally because we perceive that the performance has deteriorated since it was first purchased. Our expectations are that increased processor speed, extra memory and larger hard disk will make our lives less frustrating.

However, after the initial burst of enthusiasm over the improved performance, we are often disappointed and frustration begins to return when the time taken to boot the PC still seems interminable.

Why is this? Well, like everything in the world of technology, there are many answers.

Firstly, in order to make our computing experience safe and secure, we install anti-virus and spyware software. By their very nature, these pieces of software have to be loaded into memory first and are constantly on guard watching everything that happens to prevent unauthorised intrusion or infection from viruses etc. This activity itself obviously slows down performance because of the overhead involved in monitoring all activity.

Then there are the instant messaging programs that normally load into memory when Windows is started and sit and wait for any of your correspondents to go online.

Similarly, there are a host of other programs that are loaded into memory by default at installation time (this can usually be changed). These include synchronisation programs for handheld PDA's (Private Digital Assistants), mobile phones and entertainment devices, “go-faster” downloading utilities that take over anytime you decide to download something from the Internet and claim to do it twice as fast as anyone else. The list is endless.

With all these programs being launched in the background when you start Windows, it is not really surprising that you can go away and have a coffee and maybe lunch as well, whilst waiting for your computer to complete booting.

One other factor is affecting not only the time taken to boot your computer, but almost everything else you do, and that is the deteriorating performance (in real terms) of your hard disk drive. Hard disks are one of the few remaining mechanical devices used by your computer.

Recent research undertaken by the processor manufacturer Intel reported that whilst the power of processors had increased 30-fold over the past 10 years, performance of hard disk technology had increased by a factor of only 1.3.

Whilst processing power is being exponentially increased with every new generation of processor, and semi-conductors technology is continuously being improved; by comparison, hard drive manufacturers are still constrained by the laws of physics.

At the same time, software companies continue to publish ever more complex programs which are full of additional (perhaps unwanted) features, all of which require more processing power and large hard disks.

The hard disk capacities are continue to increase whilst reducing the physical size of the drives. Some manufacturers are also now beginning to produce "hybrid" hard disk drives that use a combination of mechanical components and solid state memory to overcome the physical constraints and improve the transfer speed of data from the processor to the hard disk. The cost of solid state memory continues to fall and therefore the combination of these two technologies can produce benefits.

For example when Windows starts up, there are many components of the operating system that are needed to enable it to function quickly. This is particularly true with notebook computers that have "hibernated". Maintaining these system files in memory rather than on the hard disk will bring the notebook back to full operating much faster. Storing other frequently used system information in memory, rather than on the hard disk itself will improve performance.

In the longer term, it is likely that storage devices will be entirely solid state memory. Currently costs are still too high to make it a viable option for anything other than high-end computing facilities. The cost of solid state memory will continue to fall and in the end, it will result in the death of the mechanical hard disk drive, and divert our frustration to some other element of computing technology!

AOL TO END DIAL UP ACCESS SERVICES

It was recently announced by AOL that they are to move away from their dial-up internet access services (which meantime will be given away for free), in favour of moving to a more streamlined business with its focus on its "audience" services.

AOL was, and still is the most successful dial-up internet access service, but has been suffering from a lack of focus within its various businesses, which in some ways conflicted with each other. AOL intend to grow their business globally, concentrating on advertising revenue, rather than subscriptions. It is currently trying to sell its European dial-up Internet access business and there are a number of organisations that are interested in buying, including BSKyB, Carphone Warehouse

NEW "ANONYMOUS" BROWSER

Another new free internet web browser has been launched. Called TORPARK, it claims to enable users to browse the Internet totally anonymously.

It uses its own encrypted network to route web pages between you and the destination. It also periodically changes your IP address (the digital internet address used to identify you) temporarily, which makes it almost impossible to trace who you are. The analogy being used is that the browser makes you as an individual "disappear" in a crowd of other users.

The browser is based on the Mozilla Firefox open-source software (Open Source means that anyone can take the source code of the software and modify it at will, providing it is not doing it commercially). It was produced by a company called Hacktivismo, an international group of computer security experts and human rights workers with considerable experience, particularly with methods used by hackers.

The browser software itself is only 9.3Mb in size and has been designed to run not only from a computer hard disk, but can also be put onto a "thumb drive" (a small solid state memory device that plugs into a USB port on your computer and can be used like a small portable hard drive). In this way, the software can be taken and run on any computer, for example an Internet Café or other public access terminal for truly anonymous browsing.

You can find a copy by visiting this address:

<http://torpark.nfshost.com>

As usual, neither May Day Consulting nor Facilitators UK recommend, or provide any warranty that this software is fit for purpose.

We wish to acknowledge with thanks that some of the material contained within this publication has been sourced from Computer Weekly, PC Pro, BBC and other reputable sources..

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