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Technical Geekery Tips

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Microsoft Word



Ever had a while when you only worked on one document? Do you often get back to your computer and just want to open your last document again? It's a waste of time to have to find it again or even to find it from the file menu when all you have to do is make a new shortcut that opens the last-modified document:

- Create a shortcut to Word. This is probably easier said than done:
 - If you have Office 2002 (Office XP), right-click the desktop, choose New → Shortcut, and type "*C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office10\Winword.exe*" (quotes must be typed)
 - If you have Office 2003, replace the Office10 in the above step with *Office11*.
 - If you're still stuck with Office 2000, replace it with simply *Office*.
 - If you have Office 2007,
- Click Next, give the shortcut a name, and finish.
- Right-click the new shortcut and choose Properties.
- On the Shortcut tab in the Target text box, go to the end of the text in the box. Type a space and then */mfile1*. Click OK.
- Rename the shortcut to something like *Open Last Document* and put it in a convenient location.

Firefox

Version 3.0



- Ever close a tab accidentally? If you aren't way behind the times and using an ancient version of Firefox, simply choose History → Recently Closed Tabs and reopen the tab. Unfortunately, this won't replace any data you typed into the page, like if you were filling out a long form.

Internet Explorer

Version 7



- You know that annoying “You’ve opened a new tab” message every time you open a new tab? Well, it’s surprisingly easy to fix. Next time you get that message, just squint at the bottom of the screen and check the “Don’t display this message again” box. From now on, when you open a new tab in IE, it’ll open to a white page like it should.

Google Chrome

Version 1.0.154.36



- Ever gone to a webpage you don't want someone else to know about? Come on, everyone has. Well, with Chrome, you don't have to remember to clear your history and all that nonsense. If you want to open a special browsing window that hides your tracks, just click the wrench in the upper-right hand corner and choose New Incognito Window or hit Ctrl+Shift+N.

Keyboard Shortcuts



- Well, everyone knows about and uses Ctrl-Z for undo, right? In some people it even gets to the point where they try to twiddle those fingers even when they're not near a computer. But what about Redo? Just hit Ctrl-Y.
- Do you even know what Redo *does*? It depends on the program and what you were doing. If you undo something, you can usually redo and go back to before you undid it. If you redo a redo, you will probably repeat the redo and therefore repeat the opposite of what you undid originally. Confused? It gets worse. Redo can also, true to its name, repeat the last action. Just remember that you can undo a redo if it does something wrong.
- Now go back and read that three more times so you actually understand it.

General Windows



- Do you hate hovering over the clock to see the date (and sometimes having it not even appear?) Well, here's a fix, though it might change things quite a bit.
- If you make the taskbar occupy twice its normal space, the date and day will also appear. To do this, unlock the taskbar (right-click the taskbar → Lock the Taskbar) and drag the top part up. Lock the taskbar again if you want to. Not only will you be able to see the date, you will also have more space to see running programs. The only downside is that you lose a bit more of your screen space.

Editor's Note

Don't you just love how unpredictable our computers are?



- The other day I started my computer just as normal. Nothing weird had happened lately, and I hadn't even installed anything for over a week. But I got a few weird error messages: nothing could connect to the Internet. I even got one that said "A system call that should never fail has failed." (A helpful Microsoft error message, as always.) I couldn't figure out what the heck was up. So I loaded System Restore. The window never appeared. I clicked the shortcut again and was told it was already running. So I started Task Manager. Sure enough, it was showing up, but I couldn't switch to it.
- So I rebooted. Same problems and I still couldn't restore. I started in Safe Mode. System Restore still wouldn't work. I tried the Windows Recovery Environment that HP put on my hard drive (a last-ditch recovery option with Vista). No luck. So I looked in an advanced management tool and found that something that should be started wasn't, but the status was "Starting." Huh? Finally I went to the basement, waded through a flood brought on by lots of rain, and grabbed a Vista DVD that came with a different computer. I was able to restore off that--but the restore took over an *hour*.
- After that it worked. So far it hasn't stopped working again. But this is a tale that happens over and over again. One day it works, the next it just is totally broken. You can't find the cause and often you just have to learn to deal with it. System Restore is a huge step toward fixing problems quickly, effectively, and without a degree in computer science. But, Microsoft, can't we just have an operating system that *works* in the first place?

Yesterday it worked
Today it is not working
Windows is like that
--Anonymous

Announcements



- Report difficulties, technical issues, and/or factual problems with this newsletter to webmaster@thetechnicalgeekery.com.
- If someone you know wants to subscribe to this newsletter, have them visit <http://www.thetechnicalgeekery.com/Windows> and enter their email address.
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- Thanks to Chen Ye (yechen_xixi@hotmail.com) for designing this newsletter format. Unless I get a new better format from somewhere, it's going to stay this way.
- As always, I welcome any comments or suggestions at webmaster@thetechnicalgeekery.com.

Formatting

- Although I'm not so good at this and it sometimes comes out inconsistent, I try to put wording that will appear on your screen in "quotation marks" or Capitalize All The Words In It.
- If there are multiple items to click on in a row, I use an arrow like this: →. By the way, if you're interested in how to insert those in Word, just use --> (two hyphens and a greater-than sign) and hit the spacebar.
- If you have to type something, I put it in *italics* to avoid confusion about whether to type quotation marks or not.