Introducing CIP

CIP is an extremely fast IP checker, capable of handling nearly 30 URLs per second - much faster than your browser or other comparative products currently available.

CIP works interactively with you to help you keep your local "hosts" file up to date.

Normal IP checkers can take eons to complete a verification run and are not interactive, nor do they allow you to arbitrarily navigate through your URLs.

CIP is incredibly fast, is interactive, and lets you navigate where you want.

And CIP works together with GD to cull all your secondary URLs for an additional, geometrical improvement in your browsing speed.

"hosts" files are used by your browser to locate URLs on the Internet. As the IP for each URL must be resolved before it can be accessed, having a local cache of IP addresses can save you considerable time online.

CIP goes a step further than merely annotating URL/IP pairs: it verifies your data and records when the verification was completed.

CIP is a tray notification application and will only appear when you want it to.

Please read the rest of this document for further information on how to use CIP.
How it works

Everything on the Internet is currently in 32-bit IP doublewords - all addresses to all sites are actually expressed in numeric form.

When you type "www.mysite.com" into the location combobox on your browser, your browser - with the help of the Internet itself - must find the IP equivalent in order to access the site. This is the work of the DNS - the **Domain Name System**.

The DNS, organized under seven root servers world-wide, converts URLs into their IP equivalents.

Locally your Internet application sends out a query, and this query is transferred from DNS server to DNS server until the query is met. Your application cannot make contact until the IP address is known.

Searching for these IPs each time you attempt an access is naturally time-consuming. What your application likes to do, therefore, is keep a cache of URLs on disk together with their IPs so as to speed things up. This cache is a file called "hosts" which resides at specific locations both for Windows 9x and Windows NT.

On Windows 9x the hosts file is located in your "Windows" directory.

On Windows NT the hosts file is found along the path "system32\drivers\etc".

Because bookmarks and favorites are normally kept on a per-user basis, and a hosts cache is always kept on a per-machine basis, it is necessary to be able to import bookmarks and favorites from anywhere, and as many times as you need.

How fast is CIP?

INCREDIBLY fast.

But this is easy to check: do a complete verification run and then sort your URLs by the rightmost column ("Verified"). Now subtract the time for the first entry from the time for the last entry.

Barring inaccessible URLs - which should stand out after a verification run - CIP should resolve between 1000 and 2000 URLs per minute.

Starting up CIP

By default CIP will will attempt to read in your system hosts file on startup. You may of course specify the path to an alternate file on the command line.

Open CIP from the system tray by right clicking on its system tray icon and choosing Open from the context menu, or by double clicking the icon.

You can hide CIP at any time by right clicking on its system tray icon and choosing Hide from the context menu, or by double clicking the icon.

Running CIP in Auto Mode

CIP can also be run in **Auto Mode**. wherewith it will automatically load and check your system hosts cache and then exit on its own.

Simply append "/auto" or "-auto" (case-insensitive) to the command line.
Starting a hosts file

Start a hosts file by clicking New on the toolbar, by choosing File - New from the menu, or by using the hotkey Ctrl+N.

On startup CIP will attempt to locate your default hosts file. Windows setups install this file as "hosts.sam" ("sample hosts file"). You should rename it "hosts" so CIP can use it.

You can at any time start a new hosts file by invoking the New command; you can at any time open another hosts file by invoking the Open command, or by dropping a file name on CIP; but you should understand that for your hosts file to work properly it should be located at its default path.

Opening a hosts file

Open a hosts file by clicking Open on the toolbar, by choosing File - Open from the menu, by using the hotkey Ctrl+S, or by dragging a hosts file to CIP.

If the hosts file you open contains introductory comment lines, they will be preserved.

You can at any time start a new hosts file by invoking the New command; you can at any time open another hosts file by invoking the Open command, or by dropping a file name on CIP; but you should understand that for your hosts file to work properly it should be located at its default path.

Saving a hosts file

Save a hosts file by clicking Save on the toolbar, by choosing File - Save from the menu, or by using the hotkey Ctrl+S.

Only those URLs for which CIP has found the corresponding IP address (they will have the CIP icon in the left hand margin) will be saved.

You may save to an existing hosts file as well. If the hosts file you are saving to contains introductory comment lines, they will be preserved.

Note: This applies only to the target file.
Naming and saving a hosts file

Name and save a hosts file by choosing File - Save As from the menu.

Only those URLs for which CIP has found the corresponding IP address (they will have the CIP icon in the left hand margin) will be saved.

You may save to an existing hosts file as well. If the hosts file you are saving to contains introductory comment lines, they will be preserved.

Note: This applies only to the target file.
Importing bookmarks, favorites and hosts files

You can import both Netscape bookmarks and Internet Explorer favorites to your hosts file - and not only your own, but any found on disk. This is especially beneficial as your hosts file is system-wide, while your bookmarks and favorites are not.

Bookmark files ("bookmark.htm") are normally found in a sub-directory of the Netscape directory, such as "Navigator" for versions 3 and earlier, and your user directory for versions 4 and later.

Favorites (starting with a "Favorites" folder) are organized as directory trees, with their root node ("Favorites") in user profile directories or in the "Windows" directory.

Choose File - Import - Bookmarks or File - Import - Favorites from the menu to import Netscape bookmarks or Internet Explorer favorites respectively to your current hosts file.

You can even import other hosts files to your hosts file. Choose File - Import - Hosts from the menu or drag an alternate hosts file to CIP and hold down a Shift key when you drop it.
Exporting to your hosts file

You don't necessarily have to begin with your default hosts file; but you can export your current file to your default hosts file at any time.

Choose File - Export to export your current hosts file to your default hosts file.
Adding an entry

Add an entry to your hosts file by clicking Add on the toobar, by choosing Edit - Add from the menu (or context menu), or by using the hotkey Shift+Enter.

A CIP entry contains four fields, of which you may edit two: the URL and a description. The description field is optional and only for your convenience.

For your entry to be saved to your hosts file, CIP must find the corresponding IP address.

Editing an entry

Edit an entry in your hosts file by clicking Edit on the toobar, by choosing Edit - Edit from the menu (or context menu), or by using the hotkey Enter.

A CIP entry contains four fields, of which you may edit two: the URL and a description. The description field is optional and only for your convenience.

Note: If you change the URL for any entry, it is very important that you verify this URL before exiting.
Setting the external editor

CIP can spawn your favorite text editor for direct editing of your hosts file as well.

The default text editor used by CIP is X-edit, but you can change this by choosing File - Editor from the menu.
Editing a hosts file as text

CIP can spawn your favorite text editor for direct editing of your hosts file as well. Choose File - Edit As Text from the menu.

If applicable, CIP will prompt you to save your changes before editing to reload the file when returning.

Removing duplicate URLs

When you are importing bookmarks and favorites from a number of sources it is quite common to get duplicate entries in your hosts file.

You can eliminate these duplicates by choosing Edit - Clean from the menu (or context menu) or by using the hotkey Ctrl+Del.

Collecting secondary URLs

Your bookmarks and favorites represent only a fraction of all the URLs you need to access when surfing the web. The great majority are never seen, but are embedded in the HTML pages your browser accesses.

CIP works in conjunction with GD to retrieve your secondary URLs: enable the GD Transfer button on the toolbar or select GD Transfer from the Edit menu and all non-trivial remote URLs polled by GD will be automatically added to the top of your list.

Verifying URLs

Verify a URL by selecting it in the listview and clicking Go on the toolbar, by choosing Edit - Go from the menu (or context menu), or by using the hotkey Ctrl+Enter.

To verify all URLs at once, choose Edit - Select All from the menu (or context menu) and invoke the Go command.

You can end a verification run at any time by clicking Stop on the toolbar, by choosing Edit - Stop from the menu (or context menu), or by using the hotkey Esc. Attempting to exit CIP will also end a verification run.

CIP will walk through the listview and attempt to verify each selected item. If you're fast, you can keep ahead of CIP, selecting new items all the time. Or, you can change the selections ahead of CIP to end a verification run prematurely.

Editing during a verification run is otherwise disabled.
Browsing to a URL

Browse to a URL by selecting it and choosing Edit - Browse from the menu (or context menu).

Exiting CIP

Exit CIP by choosing File - Exit from the menu or by right clicking its icon in the system tray and choosing Close from the context menu.

If applicable, CIP will prompt you to save your changes to your hosts file before exiting.

Saving your settings

CIP will default to the lower right hand corner of your workspace, i.e. your desktop minus your taskbar, wherever that may be.

Whenever system metrics or color or display settings change, CIP will revert back there again, claiming, if applicable, new "desktop real estate".

By default, CIP will sort the contents of your hosts file according to the "URL" field, and in ascending order.

Settings may be saved by attempting to close CIP and holding down Shift as you do so.

CIP will save your current screen coordinates, your column widths, the sorting column and direction, and the path to the text editor you use for editing your hosts file as text.