Hot **property**

There's no shortage of properties in Windows 95. In fact they're everywhere, as Tim Nott, right-clicking his way around his screen, found out. He's been finding out about fonts, too.

They used to be called tabbed dialogue boxes and first made their appearance in places such as the Word for Windows "Options" command. Now they're everywhere and, confusingly, are called "Property Sheets". I would suggest "Leaflet" or "Book" would more appropriate for something with more than one page, but never mind. Practically every object on the screen has "Properties" — right-click on an empty part of the desktop, and down at the bottom of the pop-up menu "Properties" summons a tabbed dialogue box for display settings — exactly as if you had gone via Control Panel. Right-click on the Taskbar, and "Properties" leads to various options for the Start Menu and Taskbar, such as turning the clock off. Properties of a shortcut tell you where it resides, where it points to and lets you change the icon — a direct descendant of

Who's that girl?

The properties for data files vary very much with the type of data — Microsoft Office documents such as Excel and Word have two extra pages for summary information and statistics. Media files also run to three pages, with all sorts of information including copyright, and a player. Which brings me to the great Windows 95 FAQ (Frequently Asked Question). Who is the singer on the "Good Times" video clip? Well, look in the property sheet of Goodtime.avi and all will be revealed. You might also like to check out the authorship of "The Microsoft Sound" in your Windows\Media folder. Not one of his more interesting works, I feel, but it's good to see another Englishman in the Microsoft charts.

Program Manager's "File/Properties".

It's really worth spending some time right-clicking on everything in sight. The property sheet for "My Computer" for instance is a quick way to Control Panel/System and the Recycle Bin properties let you set its size for each drive and do away with the confirmation dialogue. Right-click on a drive letter in "My Computer" and you'll get a pie-chart display of free space, and on the second page, access to the scanning, defragmenting and backup tools. Folder properties include, most usefully, the total of nested folders, files and disk space consumed.

There are a few tips worth knowing on property sheets generally. Anything you don't understand, click first on the question mark button, then on the thing. You can also right-click on the thing, then click with either button on the "What's this?" panel that pops up. However, this doesn't always work as there is another curious feature of property sheets. Move the cursor around, and you'll notice that in certain places it changes to an I-beam: not just in the edit boxes, but in the "grey" (or whatever colour you have) area as well. You can't edit this information, but you can select it and copy it to the clipboard. For example, examine the properties of MSPAINT.EXE and you'll find you can select and copy all sorts of data, such as the

creation date and version information. Another little trick concerns the "Location" information. This only gives the name of the folder containing the object, but hold the pointer over this and a pop-up appears giving the full path.
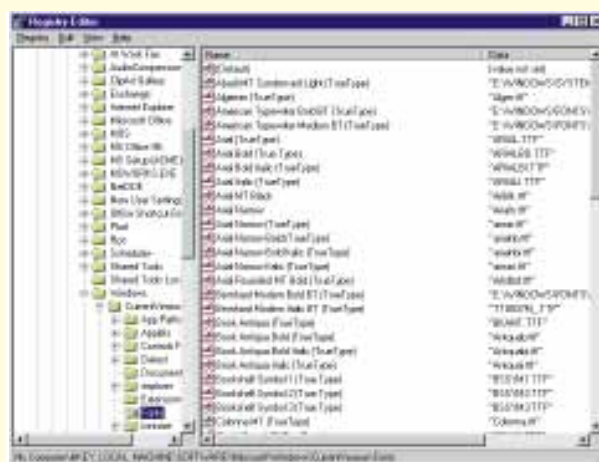
Fonts, folders and phantoms
One thing I was hoping for in Windows 95 was an improvement to font management. Well, there's good news and bad news. The good news is that you don't need to separate .FOT and .TTF files cluttering up the system folder anymore. You can also view and print samples of any font — even if it isn't installed. You can add fonts through the "New font dialog" or by dragging from another folder, much as you could with File Manager and the Control Panel Font section under Windows 3.1. If you use the former method, there is, again as previously, a check box for the option to copy the actual file over (you'd probably want to do this if installing from disk or CD), or not (if the font is already on your hard disk, but not in the default Fonts folder).

If you use the latter method (which, after all, is what Windows 95 is all about) you'll find that unlike dragging an .EXE file with the left button, you don't get a shortcut: the whole caboodle is either copied between drives, or moved between folders on the same drive. If you don't want to copy/move the file, use the right button and choose "Create shortcut". Now, in any normal folder you get a shortcut but in the Fonts folder you don't. The icon has the little shortcut arrow symbol, but the filename and size are that of the source file. Moreover, there's no shortcut page in the Properties sheet, and if you delete a

Regedit tells truths about your fonts, unavailable elsewhere

font shortcut it goes straight to oblivion, bypassing the Recycle Bin.

So what on earth is going on here? Are these shortcuts, the full files, or some other strange entity? The secret is that the Fonts folder is a "special case" — you can't, for example, create any nested folders. And if you look at it with File Manager (run winfile.exe from the Start Menu "Run" command) the shortcuts don't exist at all. Still, logic is not one of Windows 95's strong suits. What can you say of a system where, to shut down the computer, you click on the "Start" button?

If you'd like a touch of sanity, start the Registry Editor. If you can't find it in the start menu, type "regedit" from the "Run" prompt. Start at the section HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE and click on the plus sign next to it. Keep clicking on the plusses down through Software, Microsoft, Windows, Current Version, Fonts. You should then see, on the right of the screen, a list of font names, files, and if not located in the default font folder, the path. Why you have to go through this rigmarole to find out what's what on your hard disk is beyond me, but never mind.

So the upshot is if you want to keep separate sets of fonts (say a limited set for word processing and a wider range for graphics or DTP applications), it can be done. Keep your standard fonts in C:\Windows\Fonts. Create a new folder (say C:\Windows\More Fonts) for the fancy stuff, and copy the .TTF files in there. When you want to install the additional fonts, select all, right drag to the Fonts folder, and create shortcuts. To uninstall them you're going to have to pick out each "shortcut" individually and delete it. Not very good, is it? And while I'm in a Windows-bashing mood, check out the screen version of the Symbol font — that's the .FON version with a red "A" icon. Notice anything strange compared to the MS Serif and MS Sans Serif screen fonts?

Gang warfare

But now for something far more important. Having last month found out how to change the start-up and shut-down screens, the next question any seeker of truth asks is "Where's the gang screen?".

Are you sitting comfortably? Right, then right-click on the desktop, create a new folder and name it:

```
"and now, the moment you've all been
waiting for"
```

No, I'm not joking. Omit the quotes, but get the rest exactly as printed. Then right-click on the folder once more and rename it to:

Documentary evidence

One thing I like about Windows 95 is the emphasis on documents rather than applications. I find the "Documents" list on the Start button very handy, and I like the way the applets show the file first, then the application in the title bar — so you see "My Picture - Paint" or "My Letter - Word-Pad" on the Taskbar. So why on earth did the designers of Office 95 revert to the old way, with the program first? It doesn't require tremendous learning effort to remember that the "W" icon stands for Word, and the "X" for Excel. So why the totally redundant "Microsoft Word…" afterwards, taking up the space where you want to see the document name?

At last — the Windows 95 gang screen

```
"we proudly present for your viewing
pleasure"
```

Right-click and rename again, including the capitals and exclamation mark, to:

```
"The Microsoft Windows 95 Product
Team!"
```

If you really want to impress bystanders, skip all that and just create a new folder called

```
"anything.{869DADA0-42A0-1069-A2E7-
08002B30309D}"
```

The "anything" can be anything you like, but the stop, brackets and numbers must be just right — again, omit the quotes. You're now ready to go: if you've got sound on your PC, turn it on, open the folder and wonder how much disk space that lot takes up.

Finally, thanks to everyone who has written in with feedback and tips, especially Gareth Cooke, Ian Hayhurst and Ian Abbott who all came up with the gang-screen secret. All further tips will be gratefully received and usually published and acknowledged in the fullness of time. So if you've sent me deep hacks into the registry that haven't appeared in print yet, be patient.

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