



Gone, but not forgotten...

Inefficient uninstallation leaves rubbish behind: Tim Nott provides a cure. And for a bit of R&R, he goes quackers with a kludge for an icon editor.

All applications that bear the Windows 95 logo should come with an uninstallation routine but in my experience it doesn't always work.

Beta software seems particularly susceptible to a half-baked uninstall. One application I looked at recently required an hour of manual deletion and registry pruning to clear up all its droppings.

I take this sort of thing rather personally. If the companies involved are hoping for the goodwill of beta testers and reviewers with a product that may be unfinished and unstable, then they could at least have the courtesy to make sure that the victims have a reliable means of getting rid of it all.

Three common problems seem to be: leaving items in the start menu, leaving registered file types, and leaving items in the uninstall menu itself. The first is easy to cure — open the Start menu (right click on the Start button) and delete the relevant folders and/or shortcuts.

Curing the second involves a visit to the "View/Options/File Types" dialogue from any Explorer or Folder window (Fig 1). Scroll down until you see the offending entry, highlight it, and hit the "Remove" button. Before you start congratulating yourself on a job well done, open WIN.INI and check for corresponding entries in the [Extensions] section; if these exist, delete them as well, otherwise the Registry may add them again next time you start Windows.

Getting items that have been removed off the "Uninstall" list that you see from Control Panel "Add/Remove Programs" involves editing the Registry, but it is very straightforward. Having backed up the registry, run Regedit and go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Uninstall

Click on the plus sign and you'll see a number of folder icons (called "keys") in

the left-hand pane. Each of these should have three corresponding entries in the right-hand pane.

The first should be empty. The second shows the name of the application as shown in the "Add/Remove..." list, which may not be the same as the name of the key. The third shows the command to uninstall the application. Delete the entire key and the entry in "Add/Remove..." will disappear. Note that unlike editing WIN.INI, you don't need to explicitly save the Registry after editing.

Joining the association

While we're in the area, what if an application has stomped all over an existing association? Let's say you have a bitmap editor, with which files such as .TIF, .JPG and .TGA are associated. You install "Mega-Paint for Windows Demo Version" from a cover disk and this grabs the association, so that double-clicking on these no longer acti-

vates your original editor, even after you've got rid of MegaPaint and removed its entry, or entries, from the "File Types" list.

Sometimes you'll find that the original program will "mend" its associations. If not, and you don't want the trouble of re-installing it, you'll have to create a new file type. The easy way is to double-click on the file and when the "Open With" dialogue appears, type in a description — this is what will appear in the "File Types" list and the Explorer "Type" column. Make sure the "Always use this program..." box is ticked and choose a program from the list.

You might notice that certain file types, in particular those of bitmap editors which can normally handle a variety of formats, have more than one extension associated with them. The neat thing about this is that all these extensions will appear with the same "Type" in Explorer. Both .BMP and .PCX files, for example, default to the type "Bitmap Image" which opens with Paint, but you can't edit or add to this list directly and it doesn't seem possible to specify multiple extensions in a new file type.

Often, this may not be a problem — it's quite useful to have Log or Ini files retain a separate identity from Text files, even though they open with Notepad. At other times, you might want to class ASC files, say, as Text files rather than giving them a separate type. This has the added advantage that any other right-button commands (e.g. "Print") are already set up for you. If you want to create a new multiple extension file type, then create the type with the first extension and close the dialogue. If you want to add to an existing file type, then skip that bit and go straight to Regedit, having carried out the usual precautionary backup.

For the sake of this example, let's say you want to add .ASC files to the type "Text Documents". First, you need to find the middleman, the internal name used by Windows to specify the type. If you look in HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT, which is where all this stuff is stored, you won't see a key for "Text Documents". If you search for it, you'll find it in the right-hand pane, corresponding to a key entitled "txtfile". That's the middleman.

You'll notice that there are two sorts of entries in HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT: extensions, preceded by a full-stop, and the "middlemen" to which the former point. Check the

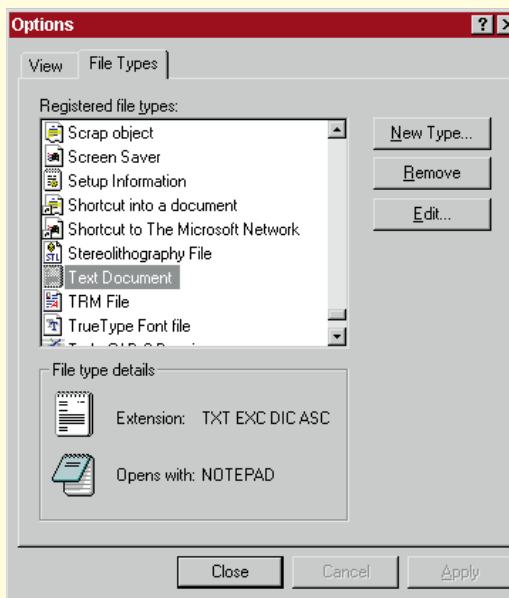


Fig 1 One file type, several extensions; but how is it done?

And the waiter brought a tray

In the April issue, we looked at a cluster of utilities that sit in the "System Tray" or "Notification Area" — that recessed bit of the Taskbar at the other end to the Start button.

I've now discovered a rather neat application that lets you add your own shortcuts to the Tray. Stick Brian McCarty's TrayIcon in your Startup folder, and you can have one-click access to your favourite applications. Setting it up doesn't brim with user friendliness — you can't preview icons, for example — but it's simple and it works. You don't have to register it, but Brian would appreciate \$5 if you find it useful. It's on our free, cover-mounted CD-ROM under Trayicon.zip.

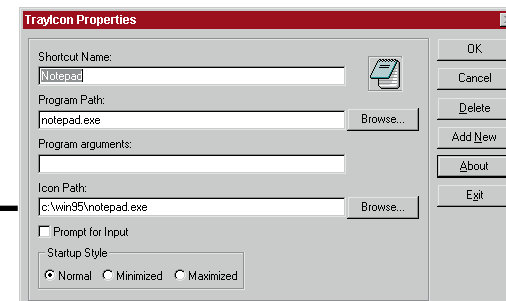


Fig 3 Add your favourite applications to the system tray

.txt entry and you'll find this points to "txtfile". So all you need to do is add an extension key. Make sure you have HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT selected and expanded, and "Edit/New/Key".

This is just like creating a folder, so type the name ".asc" (without the quotes but with the full-stop) in the space provided. It won't be in the correct position in the list, but don't worry. With ".asc" still selected, double-click on the "(Default)" entry in the right-hand pane and enter "txtfile" (without the quotes) in the "Value Data" box. And that's it. Close Regedit, and you'll find that "Text Documents" now includes "ASC".

Exchange and barf

You may have noticed a singular lack of discussion about Microsoft Exchange in this column. This is because most of the time I try not to think about it.

My PC isn't networked and I use CIX for email. I use the MS Fax driver straight from the word processor for sending faxes, but I'm stuck with Exchange for receiving them. It's slow to load and for some bizarre reason it can take a while for a received fax to show up in the in-basket. What on earth is it *doing* all that time? Up until recently, I thought the dumbest bit of behaviour was the way failed outgoing

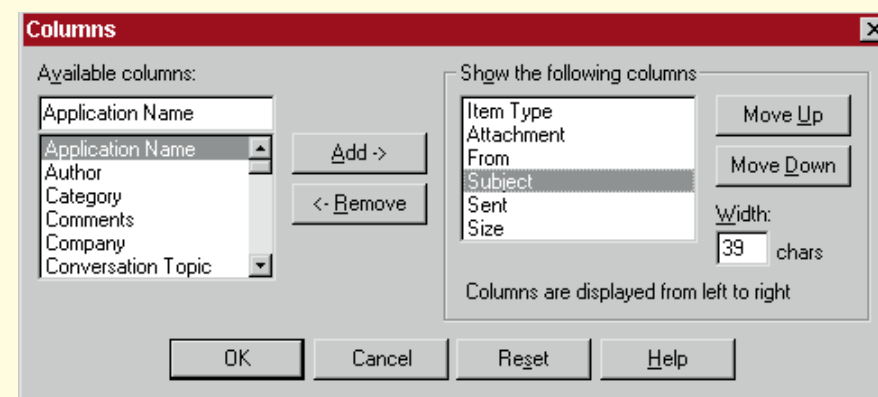
faxes sit proudly displayed in your "Sent Items" folder as if nothing were amiss. You have to look in your "Inbox" to discover a message from the "System Administrator" that the fax was "Undeliverable".

I've since discovered another equally daft touch. Do not trust the "Received" column — it tells lies. You know that annoying message you get when you've viewed a fax?: "Do you want to save changes to this item?" I couldn't really see what changes I could have made and thought it might be a distant cousin of the Notepad bug, that asks this when you've turned on word wrap but doesn't actually do anything. But I was wrong.

Just out of curiosity I answered "Yes" the other day and was pleased to discover that a fax I'd had to turn upside down was saved that way. Excellent, except that the "Received" date had also changed to that of the save. Call me pedantic, but I did rather expect this column to record the original time and date that the item had landed on my machine, rather than that when I last looked at it.

There is, you'll be relieved to hear, a Way Round This: with the "Inbox" open, go

Fig 2 Customise Exchange with different columns for each folder



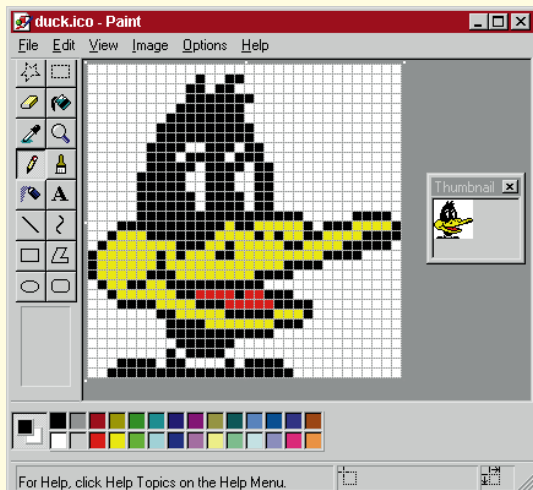


Fig 4 Roll your own icons with Windows Paint

Turn on "Thumbnails" from the "View" menu or toolbar and make sure "Edit/Drag" or the "Hand" button is selected. This way, you can avoid the scroll bars and page up/down buttons completely — it's much easier to navigate between pages with the thumbnails, and on the same page with the "Hand" tool — you just drag the page around.

Just to show I'm fair, there's something I do like about Exchange — the little arrow on the column headings that shows you how they're sorted. Now, if they could make it a little more visible, the programmers could offer it to those who created Explorer. In return, the Explorer programmers could offer the "one click on the heading" to reverse the order, instead of the "right-click/menu" seen in Exchange.

Quacking good icons

A while ago, I was bemoaning the lack of a decent icon editor for Windows 95. I'm pleased to report that I've now found one, from a rather unexpected source. It's free and you don't even have to download it or install it from the cover disk.

Open Paint. Yes, the Mspaint.exe that you get with Windows. Go to "Image/Attributes..." and set the height and width to 32 of those things Microsoft calls "Pels" but which everyone else calls "Pixels". Go

to "View/Zoom/Custom..." and pick "800%". From "View/Zoom" again, turn on the grid and the thumbnail view and design away.

Now here comes the incredibly cool bit: the top left pixel sets the "transparent" colour; i.e. any part of the icon that's the same colour, as this will change to that of the current background.

When your tiny masterpiece is finished, save it with the extension .ICO. It's not a Paint option so you'll either have to type it in or rename the file once saved. What you have then is not a true icon (.ICO) file, it's still a .BMP. But it looks like an icon, it walks like an icon, and if you attach it to a suitable sound-clip, will even quack like an icon. In fact, you don't even have to save it with the .ICO extension because if you pick "All files" from the "Type" box when browsing for an icon, Windows will be happy with any .BMP file. It will even resize it if it's not 32 x 32 pixels, though the result isn't usually very good.

This is all part of the same trick as displaying Paint icons as miniatures of the images that appeared in the January issue column (Fig 4). However, it does make browsing far easier, and you'll also find that saving as, or renaming to, *.ICO automatically displays the file as an icon without having to hack the Registry.

So how do you get around the problem of not being able to open "real" .ICO files, or those embedded in another file? Brace yourselves: though I say it myself, this is a kludge little short of brilliant.

First, you need the icon you want to edit displayed full size in a folder. Resize the folder window so that not much more than the icon you want is visible. Alternatively, open the icon browser dialogue and browse/scroll till you see what you want. Grab a "screenshot" to the Clipboard by pressing Alt + Print Screen.

Create a new file in Paint, as before, with the image attributes set to 32 x 32 pixels. Paste the screenshot into Paint and you'll be informed that the image on the Clipboard is larger than the bitmap and asked whether you want the latter enlarged. You don't.

After you've pasted, you'll notice that you can drag the oversize image around until the bit you want is centred in the Paint editing area. Select another tool, and bingo — you've caught the little blighter and can edit and save it.

to "View/Columns". My goodness, there's a lot of stuff here you never knew you needed, so when you've had a good play with it all, remove the "Received" column from the right-hand pane and add the "Sent" column instead — this doesn't appear to change. You can jiggle the order of the columns with the "Move Up" and "Move Down" buttons, but don't bother with the width: it's much easier to do this by dragging the joins in the column headers themselves.

The fax viewer itself is a rather strange beast. On my system, at least, new faxes seem to default to an unreadable 25 percent view. The trick here is to avoid the pre-set zoom levels and set the view to "Fit Width", either from the Zoom menu or the toolbar button. This seems to avoid the peculiar effect of the sheet "jumping sideways" when you move between pages.

Take six...

- 1. Any application** You can open any registered file from the generic "File/Open..." and "Save As..." dialogues. With Notepad, for example, select "All files (*.*)" from the "Type" list and right-click, then "Open" the one you want — let's say it's a .BMP. Unlike a double-click or pressing the "Open" button, this will load the file into a new instance of Paint.
- 2. Word 7** To get a list of every Word command, go to "Tools/Macro" and select "Word Commands". Scroll down to "ListCommands" and run it. You'll end up with a table showing commands, keystrokes and modifier keys.
- 3. "Run..." command** Windows remembers the last 26 things that you've "Run" from the "Start" Button. Click on the arrow beside the input box to see a scrolling list.
- 4. Media Player** Double-clicking on the title bar toggles between hiding and showing the full "set of controls".
- 5. More Multimedia** If you "Open" rather than "Play" a media clip from the right-button menu, the "player doesn't close when the clip is finished".
- 6. Paint icons** We covered this in the January issue but I've had so much email from those who missed it, here it is again: open the Registry, and go to "HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT/Paint.Picture/DefaultIcon, then double click on "Default" in the "Name" column. Change the "Value Data" to "%1" without the quotes. Paint file icons will then appear as miniatures of the file.

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