Windows ^{xp}Q&As

Q When my system ran Windows 98 I could use the command 'rundll32.exe shell32.dll, SHExitWindowsEx 1' (from the August 00 issue of *PC Advisor,* page 221) in the Windows Task Scheduler to shut down my computer at a specified time. Now that I have upgraded to Windows XP I find that this command produces the message: 'Error in Shell32.dll. Missing entry:SHExit WindowsEx'. How I can shut down Windows XP and turn off my computer automatically?

A Like many Windows tips that exploit undocumented features of Windows, the shutdown tip was version-dependent. Windows XP provides a couple of programs that are intended to be used to shut down the computer: tsshutdn.exe and shutdown.exe.

If you're interested, you can see the command line arguments for these by opening a command prompt and typing tsshutdn /? or shutdown /?.

Although some people claim to have successfully used one or other of these commands to shut down their PCs, a few have not managed to get their system to do what they want. In our tests we found that the tsshutdn prompt would log off but not shut down the PC, while the shutdown command would shut the system down but not power it off.

The only effective solution we found was Andrej Budja's free shutdown utility which you can download from www.aumha.org/downloads/shutdown.zip.
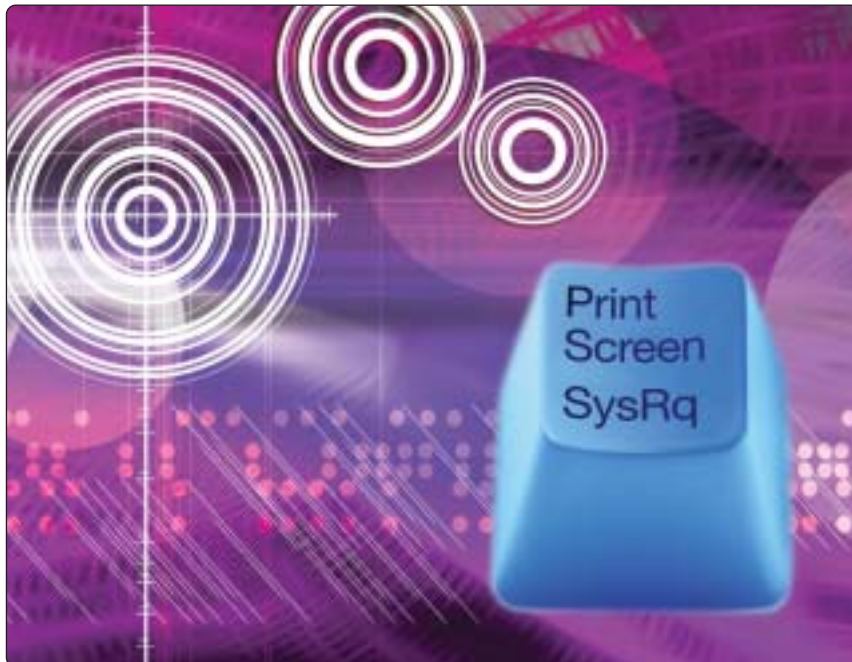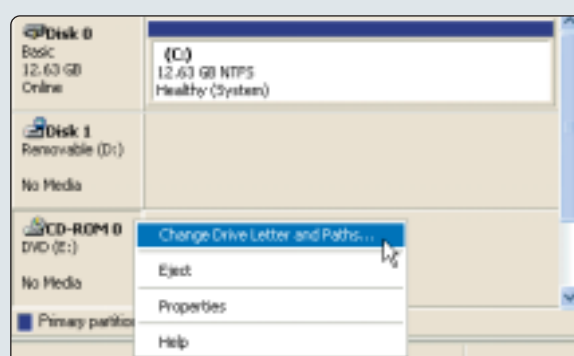
Q How can I make Print Screen work under Windows XP? Windows Help is incorrect as Microsoft has described the method used in Windows 98.

A Print Screen works in exactly the same way under Windows XP as it did under 98. When you press the Print Screen key a snapshot of the entire screen is copied to the Clipboard, from where it can be pasted to a graphics program and printed. (Windows Paint can be used in the absence of anything better.) Alt, Print Screen copies a snapshot of the currently active window instead.

There's no way within Windows to get the screen contents printed automatically. If you frequently have to print copies of your screen and need that level of convenience, invest in a third-party print screengrab tool.

Beware, though: some of the print screen utilities advertised on the web are more like graphics programs with a screen capture feature and don't offer the simplicity of a one-click print screen.

One program that does offer the one-click print feature, however, is Print Screen Deluxe from American Systems (www.americansys.com), although this will set you back around £19.

You decide your drive letters
XP TIP

Windows usually decides which letters should be assigned to each drive and partition, but if you run Windows XP you can change the default assignments. You do this using the Computer Management tool, which is accessed from Control Panel, Administrative Tools.

Select Disk Management in the lefthand pane – look down the righthand side and you should see a list of your drives. Right-click the one that you want to change and select Change Drive Letter and Paths.

A new dialog box will appear. Click Change then select the desired new drive letter from the drop-down list and click ok.

This has several options including logging off, going into standby mode, hibernation (if this has previously been enabled) and shutting down. You can specify a delay and optionally force the action so that shutdown isn't postponed indefinitely by programs that are waiting for a user to respond to a message box.

Think carefully before using this last option, though, as it could cause you to lose any unsaved work.

Extract shutdown.exe to the Windows folder (or some other convenient location). When using it, always specify the full path to avoid running the identically named but less functional Microsoft version. You can see the list of arguments by typing c:\Windows\shutdown /? at a command prompt.

Q **My PC runs Windows XP Home with SP1. The other day I did a system restore. Now, when I visit Windows Update, it tells me that I need three updates. I downloaded them, but they failed to install because, according to the installation history, they are already on my system. How can I get them to install properly?**

A Using Windows Explorer, open System32 in the Windows folder. Locate the subfolder named CatRoot2 and rename it to CR2old. Then try Windows Update again. If this works, you can delete the CR2old folder.

It's also a good idea to temporarily disable any antivirus and web accelerator software you may be using, as these

utilities can sometimes interfere with the update software.

Q **My old computer let me upload files to my website using the Web Publishing Wizard. When I try the same thing on my new computer running Windows XP it takes me to MSN or XDrive, neither of which I use. How can I get this to work the way it once did?**
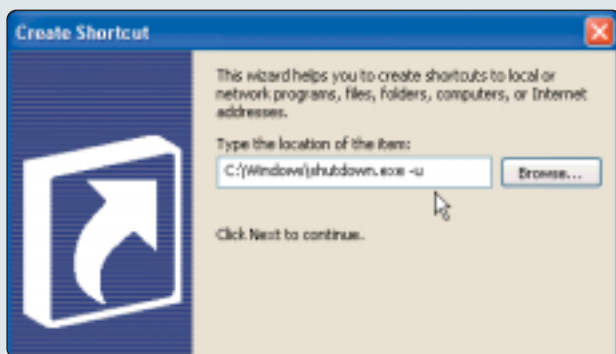
A Download the Web Publishing Wizard (Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher) for Windows 95 and NT 4.0 from the Microsoft Downloads site at www.microsoft.com/downloads. Type Web Publishing Wizard into the Keywords box and click Go to be taken to the download link. ■
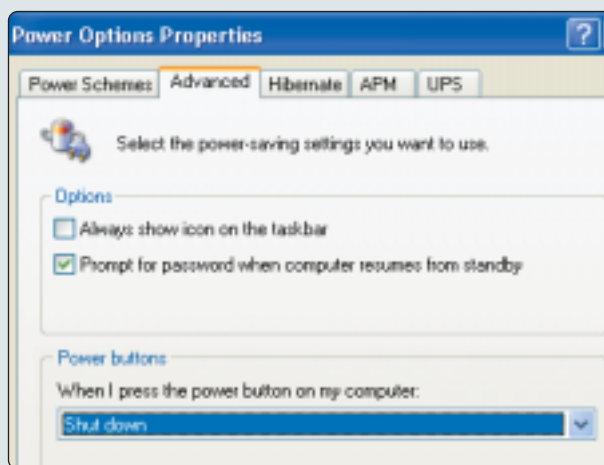
Shut down at the press of a button

XP TIP

For years, those who disagreed that the Windows user interface was intuitive would commonly retort: what's so intuitive about having to press the Start button in order to shut down the system?

Now, with Windows XP, you can shut down by pressing the computer's power button. But don't try it until you've checked that this feature has been enabled or you might turn off the power without shutting down Windows first. Here's how to enable it.

1 Open Control Panel then click on Power Options. Select the Advanced tab. In the Power buttons panel, under 'When I press the power button on my computer', check that 'Shut down' is selected. If not, select it and click ok. Now you can safely shut down by pressing the power button

2 If you don't see the Power buttons panel at all, your computer doesn't have the capability of informing Windows when the power button is pressed. But don't despair. You can easily create an Off button for your computer on your desktop instead. First, you'll need to get the shutdown.exe program which is on this month's cover disc and copy it to the Windows folder.

Right-click the desktop and select New, Shortcut. Under 'Type the location of the item' enter 'c:\Windows\shutdown.exe -u'. Click Next and type the name Power Off for the shortcut, then click Finish

3 Right-click your new shortcut, select Properties then, from the list of options for Run, select Minimized. For a finishing touch, click Change Icon and choose a suitable icon for the shortcut. There's a nice one between the Help icon and the Recycle Bin. Now you have a quick, convenient Off button located on your desktop