



Q I have a laptop running Windows XP and I want to synchronise its My Documents folder with my desktop PC. I thought I found the solution in the Synchronize utility under Accessories, but try as I may I can't find any way to add the My Documents folder to the list of items to synchronise.

A You don't say which version of Windows XP you have, but we'll guess that it is the Home edition. In this case, it's a fairly common question. Unfortunately, the equally common answer is that you can't do it. The Offline Folders feature of Windows XP is supported only in the Professional edition. Why Microsoft

omitted it from the Home edition we don't know, but it seems that someone forgot to tell the Help writers – if you search Windows Help for 'offline folders' you'll find some instructions that simply won't work under XP Home.

If you do have Windows XP Professional and simply haven't looked at Windows Help then we suggest you do so, as it is all explained there. You probably won't work out how to use this feature without the aid of the Help section. For starters, you'd almost certainly never guess that the Offline Folders tab of Folder Options doesn't appear if you have Fast User Switching enabled, which you probably will as it is the default setting.

If you're stuck with XP Home, or don't want to lose the use of fast user switching, you'll need to consider using one of the third-party folder synchronising utilities that are available. Alternatively, you could try the command line method described elsewhere in this month's Helpline which starts on page 198.

Q I recently upgraded my Dell PC to Windows XP Professional. It no longer powers down as it did under Windows 98: it hangs at 'saving settings'.

← XP Synchronize: it works with folders only in the Professional edition



I installed Easy CD Creator at about the same time as I noticed the fault. Do you know how to fix it?

A There are known problems with Easy CD Creator that can cause Windows XP to hang at shutdown, or alternatively to restart instead of shutting down. Visit the Roxio website (www.roxio.com) where you can download Windows XP updaters for Easy CD Creator 5.0 Basic and Platinum. If you have an older version then you'll have to upgrade as earlier versions aren't compatible with Windows XP at all.

Q I recently had a new computer built for me and I installed Windows XP on it. Unfortunately, the builder spelt my name wrong, which is annoying whenever I see it in the Documents and Settings folder. I can't change the name using the Rename option as it is a system folder. Can you help?

A The name of a user's personal folder under Documents and Settings is the same as the name under which the user was set up. Unfortunately, although you can change your username using the User Accounts application in Control Panel, the change doesn't carry over and you're stuck with the original folder name. The reason for this is that many applications may have stored paths to files under the old name and these paths would be incorrect if the folder were renamed.

Probably the only solution is to create a new user with your correctly spelled name. You can then transfer your files to the new user (via the Shared Documents folder), after which you can delete the wrongly spelled user.

Q My system has a Biostar M7VKB KT133 Skt A 5P 1I motherboard. I am trying to install Windows XP Professional, but half way through I receive the error that a problem has been detected and Windows has been shut down to prevent damage to the computer. The problem is 'Unmountable boot volume'. Can you help?

A This error can also appear in a black text mode screen earlier in the setup procedure. It can occur if the computer uses an UDMA (ultra direct memory access) hard disk controller; the Bios is configured to force use of one of the faster UDMA modes; and only a standard 40-wire cable (not the correct 80-wire 40-pin cable) has been used to connect the UDMA drive to the controller. There is a risk of data loss in this configuration and Windows shuts down in order to prevent it. The solution is to replace the 40-wire cable with the correct cable, or alternatively to load the Bios default settings, which use slower disk access modes that use only 40 wires. This will result in poorer performance, though.

The error can also occur if the file system is corrupted. If this is the case, the second parameter of the Stop: 0x000000ED error will be 0xC0000032. To repair the file system, boot the computer from the Windows XP CD and, when the Welcome to Setup screen appears, press R to select the Repair option. Enter the administrator password when you are prompted to do so (if no password exists yet just press Enter.) At the command prompt type Chkdsk /R and hit Enter, then type Exit and press Enter to restart the computer. Before continuing with Windows XP Setup you may wish to troubleshoot the hardware to determine the cause of the file system corruption.

Q I've heard about Microsoft's service pack for XP, but I don't know if I really need or want it. Can you tell me what it will do to my system?

A Windows XP Service Pack 1.0, which was released on 9 September, is a



↑ Changing the name of a user won't change the name of the Documents and Settings folder

Change Windows XP folder icons



Have you ever wanted to change the icons Windows uses for folders to something representative of the folder contents? Under Windows XP it's easy. Just right-click the folder, select Properties and click on Customize. At the foot of the dialog box, click Change Icon (see right). You can then choose one of a number of different icons for the folder. You can also click on Choose Picture and select an image file to place on the folder when it is shown in Thumbnail view.

You don't have to make do with the standard selection of icons provided by Windows. Click the Browse button on the Change Icon dialog box and choose an icon library DLL, an individual icon file that you've created yourself using an icon editor, or a program (EXE) file. You'll find links to dozens of free icon libraries at www.iconcool.com/part1.htm, and even more icons, plus icon-editing tools, at www.filelibrary.com/contents/windows/130/27.html.

For a folder containing files created by a specific program – for example, Microsoft Word or Excel – try using an icon from that program's EXE file (see right). You can use this tip to jazz up your Start menu, too. Right-click the folder icon for a cascading menu, click on Properties, Customize and change the icon to that of the main program in the group.



↑ After clicking on Change Icon you can choose from a range of different icons or import your own picture



↑ Most Microsoft programs have their own range of icons to choose from

200MB set of bug fixes, feature upgrades and technical tweaks. Service packs are standard to Microsoft's operating system release cycle and it's a good idea to install this one. It includes all of the security patches available via XP's built-in Windows Update facility, which automatically downloads and installs OS improvements, as well as all the updates that resulted from the Windows code review conducted earlier this year.

SP1 is especially notable because it will introduce changes to the operating system that bring Microsoft up to speed with its proposed antitrust settlement with the US Department of Justice. For one, users are expected to manually set the default 'middleware' applications that open when machines running Windows XP boot up.

There are also two new Start menu tools: the first allows you to add and remove Microsoft middleware applications, while the second – a menu for setting program access and defaults – will help you determine which middleware applications you want to open automatically. So for example, instead

of launching Internet Explorer to view a web page, you could set the default to launch the Netscape browser, or you could choose to launch Real Player instead of the Windows Media Player to play back audio or video files.

Other minor upgrades to the operating system include some changes to the controversial Product Activation feature, originally created to prevent a single copy of Windows from being illegally installed on more than one machine. This requires a user to have a unique product key to run the software. Those who attempt to install a single copy of Windows XP on a second PC will be pointed instead to a website where they will be able to purchase a second product key online.

With the service pack, Microsoft will also outfit its latest operating system to work with its new technology, codenamed Freestyle, which allows users remote control PC management.

Windows XP Service Pack 1.0 will also add support for new computers such as the Tablet PC and the Mira desktop computer, officially known as the Windows Powered Smart Display. The Mira's monitor and processor are connected wirelessly, allowing users to access their hard drives and the internet from the detached monitor.

These technical changes won't be apparent to current Windows XP users, however, because Mira and Freestyle will only work on specialised PCs currently in development. HP is planning the release of

→ Windows XP allows you to enter a hint to help should you forget your password. You can access it by clicking on the ? symbol to the right of the password entry field



an entertainment-laden PC, based on Freestyle and featuring TV and VCR functions, which is officially known as the Windows XP Media Center Edition.

Q I am always forgetting my passwords, and Windows XP gives me yet another one to remember at logon. How can I make remembering the password secure without resorting to writing it down?

A Windows XP lets you create a hint to jog your memory in case you forget your password. (Note that this option works only if your computer is not part of a network domain. To check, right-click My Computer, select Properties, click the Computer Name tab, and then look for an entry for 'Domain'.) Open Control Panel and click or double-click User Accounts,

depending on your setup. If you're an administrator, choose your account name. Click Change my password or Create a password (if you don't have one). Enter your existing password (if you have one), your new password, and your password hint. Even if you're just adding hint text, you still must enter the old password.

Make your hint clear enough to remind you but vague enough not to give away your password (anyone can view your hint). When you're finished, click either Change Password or Create Password. The next time you forget your password when logging on, click the ? button to the right of the password prompt to see your hint. ■



For our in-depth Windows XP guide, as well as top software, hardware and internet hints, don't miss the latest issue of Tips & Tricks, out now

How long will your Windows be supported?



Not made the upgrade to XP yet? Happy with your old operating system? Remember that you won't enjoy the support of the Microsoft mothership for ever. Read on to discover how long you've got before Microsoft cuts the apron strings...

- Windows 98 (and the 98 SE variant) recently entered what Microsoft calls the Extended phase of its lifecycle. This means that it can't be sold off the shelf to consumers any more. More importantly, support options will be limited. And in June 03 Windows 98 enters the Non-Supported phase, at which point we're on our own. There will doubtless be a lot of Windows 98 information available – in books, on the web, and in people's heads – but it's the big bye-bye as far as Microsoft is concerned.
- In theory, Windows Me – which basically attaches some of the funky look and feel of Windows 2000 to the Windows 98

internals – has a bit longer. Microsoft says Me is scheduled to enter the Extended phase on 31 December 03, but already it seems to have been effectively sidelined by Microsoft. No serious updates have emerged from Microsoft and despite the bugs (of which there are dozens) there has never been a 'big fix' service pack for Me.

- Windows 2000 is a technically superior piece of work as operating systems go and so obviously has a few more fans at Microsoft. There have been two service pack updates already, though the last of them was in May 01 and a third is reported to be nearly ready. But Windows 2000 doesn't have much longer to go either: 31 March 03 is the date scheduled for Windows 2000 to enter the Extended phase of its lifecycle, and the Non-Supported phase will probably commence a year after that.