INFO-TEK

The Computer Guys

a Kansas City Computer Consulting Firm

Technology Tips and News for Busy Professionals

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Greetings!

We hope you enjoy and benefit from these technology tips and news for busy professionals.

INFO-TEK employs a full time staff of trained and certified computer experts who are quick to respond, easy to talk with and people you can trust.

We specialize in small business and home office clients and we have helped thousands of people in the greater Kansas City area with their computer service needs at very competitive and affordable rates.

Internet Security

When you surf the Net (Internet) it's important to remember that you're on a network where people can monitor your traffic and attempt to access your computer any time you're online. Still, there is no reason to be unduly paranoid about using the Internet. These simple precautions are usually sufficient protection when going online:

Install a firewall
Keep people from physically accessing your computer. Hackers gain access to your computer's contents via a "back door" that allows them to control your computer from the network. Protect yourself by installing a secure firewall.

Don't open email attachments
They can install themselves on your hard drive and allow hackers to gain access to your system.

Turn off file sharing
If you don't use it or need it, there is no reason to keep it running. Having File Sharing turned on without a secure firewall in place will allow unwanted guests access to your file system (data).

Run Windows Security Updates regularly
Microsoft is constantly finding holes in their Windows security system so it's important to make sure you implement the fixes shortly after they come out. INFO-TEK doesn't recommend installing all the fixes that are released, just the Security Updates. It has been our experience that some of their fixes create other problems.

Install antivirus software
Have it running in the background to detect a virus immediately. Remember that an antivirus program will only work if you keep it updated.

Call us today and talk with one of our Security Specialists to help make sure your computer systems are secure.

Boot Faster With Startup Delayer

Think about what would happen at the airport if every plane tried to take off at the same time. Chaos, that's what. And yet that's the situation when a Windows PC boots: Every installed program tries to run itself at virtually the same time. As a result, your once-peppy machine can take 5 or 10 agonizing minutes to start up. What you need is a little air-traffic--make that software-traffic--control.

Enter Startup Delayer, which does exactly what its' name suggests: delays startup programs so they don't run until later. The end result: Your PC boots much more quickly.

The utility presents you with a list of all the programs that start when your system does. To set a delay for any of them, just drag it to the white bar at the bottom of the window. You'll see a line representing

the program; drag it left or right to decrease or increase the delay. Repeat this for other programs you want to postpone.

For example, if you have iTunes installed, you'll see a startup program called iTunesHelper.exe. Unless you plan to connect your iPod or run iTunes the moment your PC boots, why not delay this applet for four or five minutes? Same goes for things like LightScribe Control Panel and Google Update. Delay those for, say, seven minutes and eight minutes, respectively. Don't mess with programs you don't recognize, which might be integral to system operation, but the devils you know can easily be put off till later.

Startup Delayer is a freebie, and it's the best way I know of to speed up a slow-booting PC. It's a must-have for anyone who installs a lot of software.

→ Use Outlook to Access Your Twitter Account

If you use Outlook to manage your contacts, calendar, e-mail, and the like, why not use it for Twitter as well? That's the idea behind TwInbox, a free plug-in that adds a Twitter toolbar to Outlook.

Once installed, TwInbox adds a new folder to your inbox. (It can also create individual folders for each sender, which can be helpful from an organizational standpoint--unless you follow lots of people.)

From there you just supply your Twitter user name and password, and presto: It fetches all the tweets from your account and lets you read them just like you read e-mail.

A click of the toolbar is all it takes to send out your own update, send a direct message, reply to a message, or reTweet something. TwInbox cleverly auto-shortens long URLs via TinyURL.

The toolbar also shows you a preview of new Tweets as they arrive, which saves you from having to switch to the Tweets folder every time you want to check for updates.

In short, TwInbox is a terrific little tool, and a must-have for any Twitter-loving Outlook users. I do wish it could handle more than one Twitter account, but I can't argue with the price: TwInbox is free.

→ Rule of Thumb

Never use a USB Flash Drive (Jump Drive) that doesn't have some type of encrypted security or DO NOT use one without implementing the security first. Since they house important data and they travel around in your pocket or purse, they can easily fall out and into the hands of an unwanted person. Not using encryption is like leaving your safe unlocked.

When you need help with your computers or computer network, I'm hopeful that you will consider calling INFO-TEK at: 816-914-8826.

Go to the "Specials" section of our website to receive a 20% Off Coupon for your next On-Site Service Call.

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Sincerely,

Brian Greenstreet
INFO-TEK