

# Bytes & Pieces

Newsletter of the Hobart Computer Users Group Inc.

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## Forgotten XP password

You've forgotten the password, but Windows XP has reverted to demanding it before you can log on as Administrator. You've bought a machine with XP installed, but the seller didn't give you the password. The kids have been fiddling around and now nobody knows the password. A virus attack has altered the password. Whatever they may be, there are legitimate reasons why you may need to by-pass the Administrator password. But how?

As long as you have the Windows XP installation CD, there is a method that you can try without having to buy expensive password-cracking software. I'll only describe it briefly here, but Vic Ferri's more detailed explanation can be found at <http://pubs.logicalexpressions.com/Pub0009/LPMArticle.asp?ID=305>.

- Boot from the installation CD.
- The first time it pauses to ask for input, you will find an option to press **R** to repair from the recovery console.
- Ignore this and press **ENTER**.
- The next time that the installation procedure stops for input, look for **R** for repair. If it is not there, your Windows XP installation may be so corrupted that a repair is not possible. Your only option then is to do a complete reinstallation.
- However, if it is there, press **R**.
- The repair procedure will continue and require a reboot.
- After Windows has rebooted, watch for 'Installing devices'. Press **Shift + F10**.
- A command console windows will open.
- At the prompt, type **NUSRMGR.CPL** and press **ENTER**. This will give you access to the User Accounts control panel and you can change the passwords for any accounts in the panel.
- After you have made any changes, close the windows and exit the command console.
- Allow the repair procedure to continue to finality, otherwise your changes will be lost.

While the control console is open, there is another password option you may want to implement, that of not requiring a

password to be entered at all. To achieve that happy state, type **control userpasswords2** at the prompt and choose to log on without being asked for a password. Again, make sure that you allow the repair procedure to complete so that your changes are not lost.

Vic Ferri's article also explains what a **Password Reset Disk** is and how to make one. You should read his article and make the disk. This will give you another means of dealing with forgotten or corrupted passwords.

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## Windows 16-bit subsystem error

I've struck several Windows XP computers lately that gave an error message: "*16 bit Windows Subsystem C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\AUTOEXEC.NT.The system file is not suitable for running MS-DOS and microsoft Windows applications. Choose 'Close' to terminate the application*", or something similar, when installing or running certain programs. Unless this problem is corrected, it is impossible to install applications whose setup programs were not specifically written for XP, making it potentially very serious indeed.

What causes the problem? Some people report experiencing it after installing SP2, but a more common explanation is that it is triggered by one of the trojans that are circulating at present. Whatever the cause, here's a possible fix:

- Turn off System Restore to ensure that any backed-up virus are removable
- Thoroughly delouse your computer with an up-to-date antivirus program
- Run Ad-aware or similar to remove all spyware
- Download XP\_FIX.EXE and run it – this will replace AUTOEXEC.NT, CONFIG.NT and COMMAND.COM, corruption of which is the usual cause of the problem
- Turn System Restore back on
- Reboot
- Check that the firewall is active. Better yet, install a good third-party firewall
- Copy XP\_FIX.EXE to your CD of repair tools, or copy it onto a floppy disk if you don't have a burner

XP\_FIX.EXE can be downloaded from <http://www.visualtour.com/downloads/default.asp>.

If you find it doesn't work, or the problem keeps coming back, go to <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=324767> and follow Microsoft's recommended procedures for dealing with the problem.

Then resolve to maintain a fully functional firewall and an up-to-date antivirus program, and to screen regularly for spyware, in future.

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## Sharing broadband

If you more than computer in the house and you want all users to have broadband access, you can share Internet access via the computer that is directly connected to your broadband modem, by networking the computers. However, that method requires the aforementioned computer to be booted up and ready to connect to the Internet Service Provider.

There is an alternative method that does not require any other computers to be on, nor do they need to be fully networked. That solution involves a modem/router.

The cheapest and most common modem/router has two modem connections on it. One is for a network cable and the other for a USB cable. If it is a router, you can connect a computer to each connection and the modem part of the device will be switched between them as needed, allowing either or both computers to connect to your broadband supplier. More elaborate modem/routers allow up to four computers to connect via network cables and, again, operate independently.

If your broadband modem is not also a router, you can buy a separate broadband router to use in conjunction with it.

If you don't wish to do this, you will need to enable internet connection sharing and network all your computers. Most

recent computers already have the necessary network connection built-in. Older ones will need a network card. Windows ME and XP, as well as recent versions of Linux, are the easiest to network and contain all the software needed. With Windows 95 and 98, you may need to add a driver, usually supplied on a floppy disk with the network card. Other ways of networking include wireless and via your electricity wiring. Wireless equipment is still relatively expensive and powerline networking is quite new, with Netcomm planning to release the necessary hardware about mid-May.

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## When Firefox won't start

One of the many extensions that you can get for Firefox is "User Agent Switcher". This allows Firefox to respond to browser identity requests with a choice of identities, one of which is Internet Explorer. This is sometimes necessary because some websites insist that you must use Internet Explorer to access the features of the site and will not grant access to other browser users. In my experience, most modern browsers (Mozilla, Netscape 7, Opera) will successfully negotiate such sites, once the browser is (mis)identified as being Internet Explorer. In the case of Firefox, however, a slight bug exists in the User Agent Switcher and/or Firefox itself. And it is this ...

If you set the Switcher to permanently identify Firefox as Internet Explorer, Firefox may refuse to start the next time you use it. This problem can be avoided by retaining the default setting, whereby the switcher resets the identification when Firefox is closed.

If Firefox won't start because you changed this default, you can salvage the situation without having to reinstall Firefox. Find the file 'prefs.js' in [your profile](#) and delete the line containing 'general.useragent.override'. According to the author of the extension, this should fix the issue.

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## A clarification

I reported previously on Paul Horne's experience with a screen cleaner that apparently damaged the anti-glare coating on his Sony CRT monitor and would just like to make it clear that it was the Australian distributor of the product, and not the company that made the cleaning fluid, that agreed to replace his monitor. The intended moral of the story "Be careful what you use to clean your screen, especially if it has an anti-glare coating" still stands.

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## Free StarOffice 7.0

If you care to watch Sun's presentation on Sun's interoperability with Microsoft's products, you get the opportunity to download Sun's soon-to-be-replaced StarOffice 7.0. (Version 8.0 is scheduled for release in July.) Here's the offer directly from their website [https://see.sun.com/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/mcp?q=STaW0nTE\\$jqQbb](https://see.sun.com/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/mcp?q=STaW0nTE$jqQbb). Versions for all operating systems support for StarOffice 7.0 are included in the offer. A broadband link with a generous download quota is recommended if you want to take advantage of this deal.

### ***Sun Does Windows: Demos, Discussion & Deliverables***

*View this Sun Net Talk on Demand to hear Bill Howard, Sun's CIO Advocate talk with Bill Vass, Sun's CIO and Greg Papadopoulos, Sun's CTO. They'll discuss - and demonstrate - Sun's ability to interoperate with Microsoft right now, and share insights into the strategic and engineering implications of the relationship with Redmond.*

**Length:** 32 minutes

### **Topics:**

- Interoperability Background
- The Sun-Microsoft Relationship
- Demonstrations. The program includes five video demonstrations:

- Multiple OSes ? One Sun System
- Accessing Windows Apps on a Linux Client
- Accessing Windows Apps on a Thin Client
- Running Windows Apps on Solaris
- Scalable, Secure Mail Solutions for a Windows Infrastructure
- The Future/Final Thoughts
- Next Steps

**Offers:**

All viewers can receive a complimentary download of StarOffice 7, Sun's full-featured office productivity suite (compatible with Microsoft Office), plus three recent interoperability white papers covering the Sun Java Desktop System, Sun Ray thin clients and the Sun Java System Messaging Server.

**Speakers:**

- Greg Papadopoulos, Chief Technical Officer
- Bill Vass, Chief Information Officer
- Bill Howard, CIO Advocate

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## It's easy

Recently John Dvorak wrote in PC Magazine:

*Maybe it's just me, but does anyone else think that the majority of today's computer users have not been trained properly in how to use a computer? I say this because people are still asking me (and my friends) very simple questions that could effortlessly be answered by the most simple of Google searches. In fact, when answering a question by a reader I often just Google it and send the page of results over without comment.*

As I read that and the article that followed that opening paragraph, I couldn't help but nod in agreement. Many times I have been asked questions and answered them by simply searching the Internet for the information. (Where do you think most of the content of this newsletter comes from?) Why is it that members, who should know better, get on the phone when their computer hooked up to broadband is sitting there waiting to do their bidding? Are we failing to teach our members how to get more out of their computers? Aren't they listening when we try? Or are we covering the wrong topics at our meetings and should be spending far more time on basics?

What do you think? Send your views to the Committee ([secretary@hobartpcgroup.org.au](mailto:secretary@hobartpcgroup.org.au)) or to the Editor ([editor@hobartpcgroup.org.au](mailto:editor@hobartpcgroup.org.au)) and let's see what we can do to give our members what they **need**, rather than what they may think they **want**.

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1759,1787713,00.asp>

And, if you still need to ask a question, don't forget the May meeting is Problems Night. Submit your problems via the website **before** the meeting so that we can put together a more thorough answer and I'm sure we can help you.

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