



Bug-Bytes

THE MONTHLY ONLINE NEWSLETTER OF *COMPUTERBUGS*

VOL. 4, ISSUE 04

APRIL 2005

WHAT'S A PDF GENERATOR?

LEARN TO SAVE FILES IN PDF



Documents saved in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) retain the formatting of the original document and can include photos and graphics.

PDF has become a universal document format. Whoever receives a PDF document can view the file as it was created without having to open it in the same program with which it was created.

Anyone who has tried to convert a document from one word processing program to another will appreciate this feature. For example, while you can convert a Microsoft Word document to a WordPerfect document, and the other way around, some of the proprietary formatting is lost. The docu-

ments don't look exactly alike.

You can exchange documents with other users and they do not have to worry what program was used to create the file and what version of the program you used.

A PDF generator is a **print driver** that converts any document into an easy to read file that retains all of the original formatting.

For example, WordPerfect includes a built-in PDF generator although MS Word doesn't have that capability. To save a file in PDF, click on File, Publish to PDF. This newsletter is prepared in WordPerfect and saved in PDF for your viewing.

For programs that do not include a PDF generator you can buy a simple generator from www.pdf995.com for \$9.95, PDFFactory for \$49.95, or Adobe Acrobat for \$265.

Install the PDF program. When it comes time to use it, select the PDF driver from your print dialog just as if it was another printer. Check the settings and click OK. The document will be saved on your hard disk as a PDF file rather than coming out of your printer.

If you want a hard copy, open the document by double clicking on it and select print.

Q AND A

HOW DO I CHANGE THE LOOK OF AN ICON?



Generally, you pick from a series of available icons for any given program. This is another one of those feel-good tips. This tip won't make your computer run any better, but it does give you more control over the look of your desktop. Pick the icon that you like best for each icon on your desktop including the folders.

Icons are stored with executable programs (EXE), as ICO files, or as part of dynamic link libraries (DLL files).

To change an icon, right click the icon, select Properties, Change Icon. Choose from among the alternate icons shown in the pop-up menu for the program of interest. For example, right click on the Internet Explorer or Outlook Express Icon and see the different icons that are available. The screenshot shows Internet Explorer icon options.

Use Google to search for Icon Editors to see other choices.



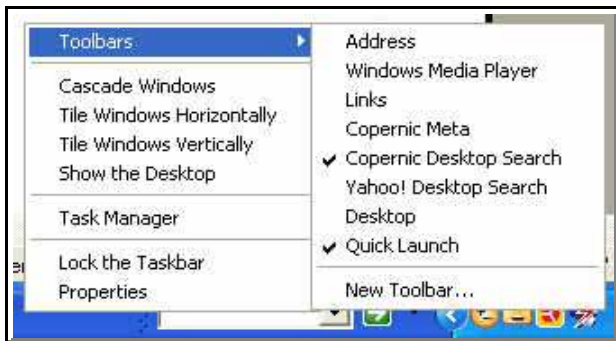
EXPLORE OPTIONAL TOOLBAR OPTIONS

ADD A DESKTOP SEARCH WINDOW TO YOUR TOOLBAR

You may ask, “Why do I need a desktop search program?” Desktop search programs do for your computer what search engines do for the Internet. That is, they bring order out of the chaos caused by the flood of data on your computer. The problem is not that we have access to too much data. The problem is how do you find a specific piece of data from among all of the data on your computer, or extract it from the Internet?

Do you have a favorite desktop search program? Why not add a search window for your favorite program to the taskbar at the bottom of your screen? In that way the search window is always visible and ready to use. In the header, the screenshot shows how *Copernic Desktop Search* looks on my taskbar.

Below, the screenshot shows the pop-up menu that appears for toolbars. Right click on an empty space on your taskbar and select toolbars. If you have downloaded and installed optional toolbars, they will show up in the drop-down menu. Note that installed toolbars are shown in the drop-down menu. To avoid clutter, pick only the one or ones that you want to appear on the taskbar. In the example, I have only Copernic Desktop Search and Quick Launch selected.



HOW DO DESKTOP SEARCH PROGRAMS WORK?

The desktop search programs currently available (Copernic, Google, MSN, Yahoo) index your data to make searches quick and easy. When you enter your search term, you are asked where you want to search. That is, your search is confined to the area that you select from the drop-down menu – the Internet or Your Computer. You can further refine your search

to just files (your hard drive), the web, images, e-mail, news, bookmarks, contacts, etc.

Thus, your search focuses only on the items that will be of the most use to you in your search. This gives you very fast search results. Why can't you just use Windows Find or Search? You can still do that. However, the built-in Windows program is very slow, and if you have indexing turned on, it is a memory hog and is very slow. The newer desktop search programs use vastly improved non-invasive indexing techniques with better control over searches, and offer many more options.

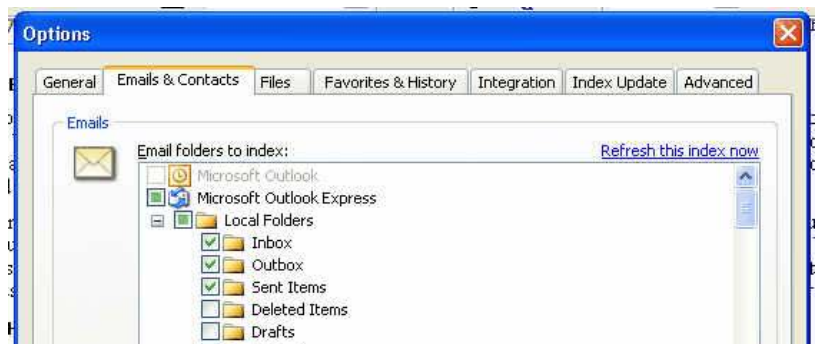
WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE ART?

Desktop search programs are in their infancy. That is, some programs are still in a beta testing form while others in their first release form. What this means to you is that these programs will continue to get better over time. Currently the programs are free I anticipate that they will remain so. So, download one or more of the programs and see how you like them.

For more information about these programs, search with Google for “Desktop search programs.” For instance, see <http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,118686,00.asp> for a general review of what is available, and <http://www.copernic.com/>, <http://desktop.google.com/>, and <http://slate.msn.com/id/2111643/>. Currently, Copernic is the highest rated product of those available.

CONFIGURE YOUR DESKTOP SEARCH

Do take the time to configure your search program. Click on options or preferences and review each tab to reflect how you want the program to work. For instance, with *Copernic*, click on Options. You'll see a general, email and



contacts, files, favorites and history, integration, index update, and advanced tabs.

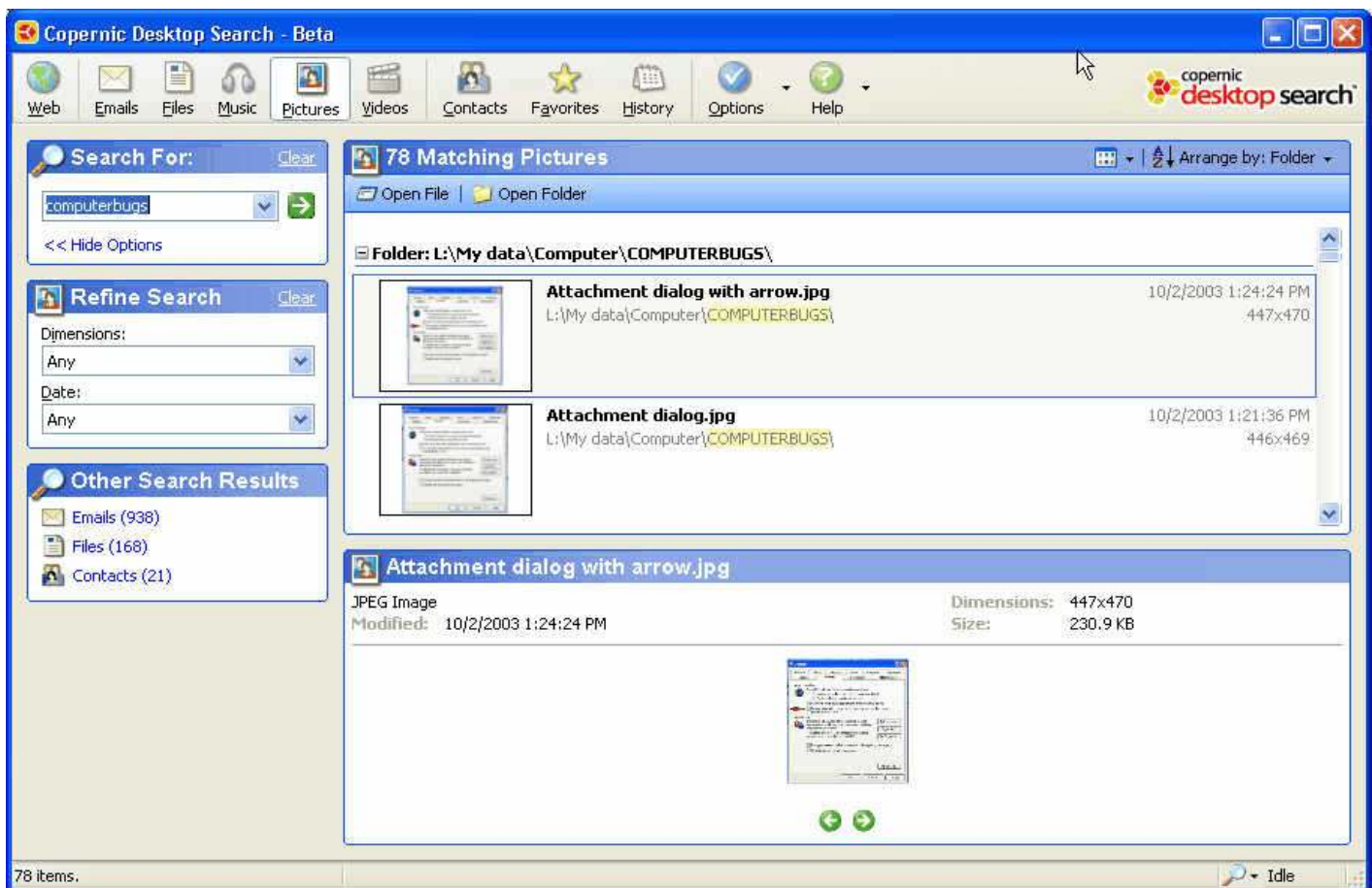
For instance, if you don't want to index and look for deleted items under e-mail, then uncheck that box.

CHECK FOR UPDATES

Given that desktop search programs are so new, periodically check for the latest versions of your program. That way, you work with the most capable programs available at the time. For instance, Version 1.2 is the current version of *Copernic Desktop Search*. However, a 1.5 beta version is available. This demonstrates that improvements are being

made and will be available in the final release form very soon.

Beta version 1.5 adds a number of useful features and options and further improves searches. It supports Outlook, Internet Explorer, Firefox, and adds support for Thunderbird contacts. Note the Other Search Results box on the lower left of the screenshot. You see the results of my searching for Computerbugs. Copernic found matches in e-mails, files, and contacts. I can click on any one of the blue links in Other Search Results and go right to those results. **Enjoy your searching.**



PROPERLY UNINSTALL PROGRAMS

THERE ARE A RIGHT WAYS AND MANY WRONG WAYS

THE WRONG WAY: New users, and sometimes even experienced users, decide to get rid of programs they don't need by simply deleting the folder where the programs reside.

Unfortunately, that is the wrong way to uninstall programs. **Why?** When you install programs, they follow a compli-



cated script that guides the installation and records those same steps for later removal. As part of that process, important and necessary data is written to the Windows Registry. Think of the registry as a diary that stores hardware and software changes and configuration information. It enables Windows to find the information it needs to support applications, including the location of files and support libraries needed to open any specific application. Without the Registry, Windows won't run.

If you merely delete a specific program folder, you leave scads of information behind in the Registry and create a series of broken links. It makes a mess that is hard to clean up.

THE CORRECT WAY: Use the Control Panel's Add or Remove Software module to safely remove unwanted applications. Even then, some items may get left behind. Some configuration data may be retained on the off chance that you may reinstall the software at a later time, and to get you up and running faster.

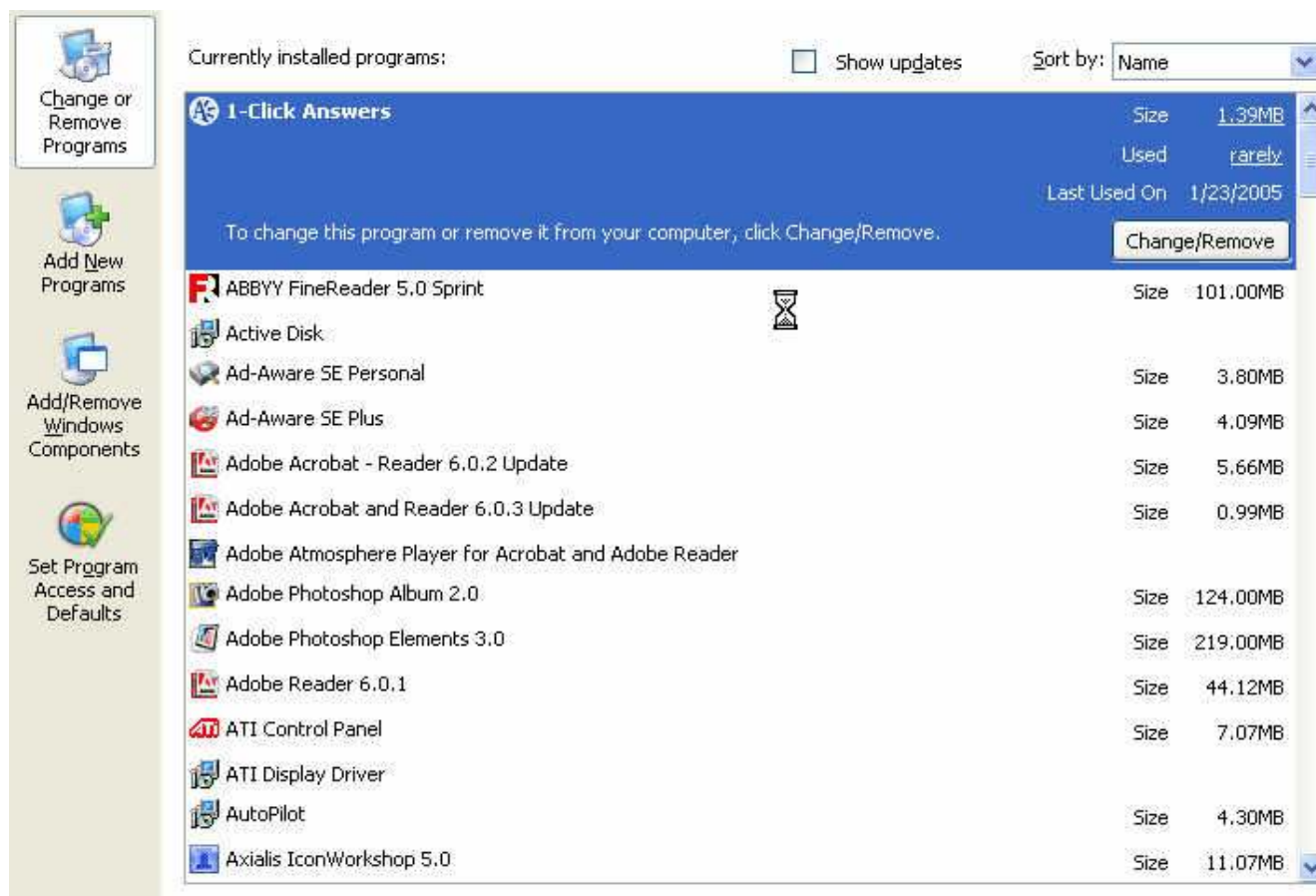
This particularly makes sense when you are ask to uninstall

an older software version before replacing it with the latest version of the same software. Maintaining your configuration information saves you time as you update your software.

When you use the Control Panel's Add or Remove Software module, or the uninstall modules included on some vendor's application CDs, Windows follows the vendors precise script to uninstall the software step by step (the reverse of the installation). Usually, this results in the clean removal of the software. However, sometimes, stuff is still left behind.

Note. The Add or Remove routine includes additional information about the applications that it monitors. It includes information on when the program was last used (It's not always completely accurate), the size of the program, and some additional information when you click the change/remove tab.

Remember. There is also an Add/Remove Windows Components link on the left side of the dialog box. See it in the screenshot shown below.



PRACTICE E-MAIL COURTESY

DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WANT THEM TO DO UNTO YOU



Unfortunately, there is no **Emily Post** for e-mail etiquette. However, the Internet offers many commonsense suggestions that make reading e-mail much more pleasant for everyone.

Most of us were taught manners by our parents as we grew up. Who will teach computer manners to grown ups? As newer technologies are adopted manners often fall by the wayside. That is certainly true for the use of cell phones, but it is also true for e-mail usage.

Here are some sound suggestions based upon things I've read.

THE DO'S: Do . . .

- **Do** think long and hard before firing off a blast in anger (called flaming) because of something you read. If your reply can lead to hurt feelings and serious misunderstandings, consider holding your reply overnight and then reread your reply. Is that really what you want to say? **Reply in haste and repent at your leisure.**
 - **Do** edit out the multiple headers that get sent with forwarded messages. Your recipients won't have to slog through all that stuff. Instead, they will see only the pertinent information. This step is especially important for nested messages where the final link is many layers deep in the message.
- I highly recommend **TidyMail** from <http://www.frontiernet.net/~airaudi/TidyMail/> to strip out the unnecessary stuff with a single button click.
- **Do** write your messages in mixed case rather than all in capital letters.

The use of all capital letters is called shouting and signifies that you are angry or responding emotionally. It is considered to be rude.

- **Do** send or forward messages to distribution lists using the blind carbon copy option (Bcc) of your e-mail client. Send a copy of the message to yourself using the To: line or to a special address that you create. For instance, I created a Private List entry in my address book that goes to me. When you use the BCC: address block, the addresses are hidden. That eliminates the long string of addresses that would otherwise show up in your messages.



Do check whether the claims of forwarded e-mails are true or don't send them. It is your reputation that is at stake. This is especially true of spurious virus notices and baseless messages that ask you to boycott certain companies.

- **Do**, be specific when asking for help. A message that scream "HELP!" or "I've got a question" are not useful. Use a descriptive subject line.

Do include a subject for every message instead of leaving the subject blank.

Do change the subject if your reply is

off the topic and starting a new thread.

Do set your e-mail client to automatically check spelling for accuracy in every message to avoid negative impressions of you.

Do answer all messages within 24 to 48 hours. To not do so indicates a lack of interest on your part and shows a lack of respect.

Do indicate if you do not want to be taken too seriously about something you said. For instance you can use the abbreviation LOL, which stands for laughing out loud, or a smiley figure such as :-) that indicates you are saying it with a smile.

Do remember that e-mail messages lack the inflection of your voice. Therefore, people evaluate your messages solely on what you say in words. Unlike speech, they can't detect whether you're happy, sad, joyful, or mad, just by reading your words.

Do make photos smaller when you send them with your e-mail messages. 320x240 pixel is a good size. If you have Windows ME or XP, right click on the photo or photos that you want to send. Select Send to, Mail Recipient. Then select the Make smaller option. Windows will automatically resize the photos for you in some sizes that are appropriate for e-mail and will open your e-mail program. Photos that are too big take much too long to download (especially for folks with dial-up modems), and they are difficult to view.