

Radio Days – 2011-10-29

Tip of the Week – Get Help Sooner

In the past week I have met two clients who had problems with QuickBooks. One client had been using QuickBooks for three months, the other for ten years. The first client's problems were much easier to fix because we only had to redo three months of transactions. This was easily done and all the transactions actually were what had happened. The bank accounts reconciled and the total deposits matched the profit from the Profit & Loss report.

The other client's QuickBooks data file, on the other hand, had to be annulled. There were too many accounts which had unbalanced transactions, the bank reconciliation had not been done for some years and many invoices had not been paid. The whole accounting system for that client was unworkable. I started his books again with a new QuickBooks data file and a new bookkeeper. This appears to be working.

Keeping Your Windows Clean

There are a number of simple tricks which can make your daily computing easier. One only works with the later versions of Windows: Windows 7 and Windows Vista. I am now, more and more, concentrating on Windows 7 because this is, according to many measures, the most common version of Windows in use both in small businesses and in people's homes.

Task Bar

This tip works in both Windows Vista and Windows 7.

The task bar is the bar, usually at the bottom of your screen, which shows the programs which are currently running. You may have noticed, when you first got your new Windows 7 computer, that there were two or three icons which were always showing on the task bar just next to the Start button. These are Microsoft programs which Microsoft wants you to use in preference to better ones from other companies.

If there are a number of program which you often use you can make them easier to start. The trick is simple: just start the program as normal, then right-click on the program's icon in the task bar and select *Pin this program to task bar*. To run a program which has been pinned to the task bar you just click once with the left mouse button. To remove a pinned program just right-click on the task bar icon and select *Unpin this program from task bar*.

If you pin a program like your word processor or spreadsheet to the task bar then you can easily start that program with one of the last few documents that you worked on. When you right-click on the program's task-bar icon you see a *jump list* of recently-opened documents: just click on the document which you want and it will open as if by magic!

ObjectDock

This tip works in Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7.

If you find that you have too many programs pinned to your task bar, and it takes too long to find the one that you want, you may find that a program called ObjectDock is very helpful. ObjectDock mimics a very useful feature from the iMac computers: a feature which Mac users love. This program takes all your most-often used programs and places them in a line along any screen edge. When you move your mouse over the dock, animation shows you which program runs when you click an icon. Particularly for those with failing eyesight, ObjectDock can make starting the correct program easier.

ObjectDock has two versions: the free one does most things that people want and the \$20 version has extra options like the ability to have tabs for different types of programs. You could, for example, have one tab for office programs, another tab for internet programs and a third tab for website creation programs.

This may be one of the most useful programs which you download and install.

Fences

This tip works in Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7.

If you find that your desktop is cluttered with icons, and you take forever to find the one that you need, you may find that a program called *Fences* is the answer to your prayers. This program, in some ways, mimics the desktop of Windows 3.1 from last century, and this is an excellent option.

Fences corrals your icons into groups. If you are careful when choosing your groups, and the contents of each group, you can make finding and starting a program or file much easier. There is an excellent short video on the Fences website which shows just how easy it is to create a fence and move icons into and out of a Fence.

Many people keep their current documents on their desktop, and Fences can make easier the task of keeping these documents organised. You could, for example, keep Word documents inside one fence and spreadsheets inside another. I have one client with many pdf documents and many images on his desktop: these could all be placed inside two fences so that they are easy to find.

Similarly, you can keep different types of programs (eg Office and Internet) inside different fences so that they are all connected rather than being scattered, higgledy piggledy, over your desktop in completely random places.

This program is an excellent way to make your computer's desktop look neater than your real desktop if you are as untidy as I am!

Further Information

Fences www.stardock.com/products/fences
ObjectDock www.stardock.com/products/objectdock