

Technically Speaking

Technically Speaking is a monthly PERT Newsletter for residents in Dieterich, Millikan, Franken, and Phillips Halls.

The Battle to Personalize Your PC

By Adam Clark
Franken Hall PERT

Many users find themselves locked in the epic battle of making their PC look and feel more unique. Let's face it. We are living in an era where even cell phones can change ring tones, color, and shape to match the personality of the user. So why not your Windows desktop?

The easiest way to change the look and feel of Windows XP is to right-click on your desktop and click on Properties. This will allow you to change your background image, choose and configure a screen saver, and to apply or modify a theme.

Another popular way to customize your desktop is to let a program do it for you. There are

many programs available online that will allow you to customize everything from the sounds your PC makes when you click on a menu to the overall appearance of your taskbar.

One such program is WindowBlinds. It will customize almost every feature of your desktop — that is, the 'enhanced' version will. The free version is available on www.download.com and is slightly more limited. The free version allows you to customize the look and feel of different windows. Windows can be set to roll-up, which is a feature similar to that of a Macintosh. The transparency of windows can also be set to allow the desk-

top or other windows to show through the active window. WindowBlinds also has free downloadable skins that allow you to further customize the look and feel of Windows XP.

Many more programs are available that allow you to personalize your PC. Simply go to your favorite search engine and type in 'desktop customization'. Don't forget that you can do a lot of things in Windows XP without getting extra software. The best way to learn is by doing, so experiment with the appearance of your desktop and let the battle begin! 🐾

On the Web!



Fun Links

www.outwar.com

- Online role playing games — great to play with friends

www.deviart.com

- Showcase your inner artist on this website

www.penny-arcade.com

- Online comic strips about video games

www.coolquiz.com

- Trivia website that includes quizzes, puzzles and more

www.cool-movie-trivia.com

- Movie trivia site with quizzes, games, and discussion boards

www.emotioneric.com

- Comical display of various human emotions

Student Storage

By: Christine Miller
Millikan Hall PERT

Have you ever been working on a paper and need to save it, but you don't have a disk with you? Well, if you are logged onto the Northwest network, this does not have to be a problem anymore! Here at Northwest, every student has 30 MB of space for their use on Catbert known as Student Storage.

In order to access this storage, you must be logged onto the Northwest network. On a university computer, you can find your storage by going to My Computer and double-clicking on the drive labeled N: It is a great place to keep all your academic work because unlike your university computer's hard drive, your data will still be available even if your computer breaks.

You can also access your student storage from your personal computer as long as it is connected to the Northwest network.

Right-click on My Network Places. Then click on Search for Computers. Type CATBERT as the Computer Name and click on Search. Double-click on the computer named Catbert. You will then be prompted for your username and password. In the username field, type NWMSU\ followed by your username. In the password field, enter your Northwest network password that you use to log in to your Northwest email. Click on OK. The contents of Catbert will then be displayed. Double-click on the Students folder within Catbert. Double-click on the folder that displays the last two digits of your username. Double-click on the folder that displays your username. Your student storage folder will then be open and ready to be used.

If you need any additional help accessing your student storage, ask your PERT! 🐾

Newsletter Staff

Gulshan Lakhani
Contributing Editor/
Author

Adam Clark
Contributing Author

Akshay Kamath
Contributing Author

Christine Miller
Contributing Author

Tabatha Verbick
Editor in Chief

Merlin Miller
Assistant Editor

Kim Todd
Assistant Editor



Computer Tips

- Your Northwest password may expire over the holiday break. Remember to change it before you leave!
- Are you tired of annoying pop-ups making your computer slow? Visit www.ada-ware.com to clean Adware and Spyware from your PC.

PERT Contact Information

Adam Clark x-6628
Franken Hall

Gulshan Lakhani x-6742
Dieterich Hall

Akshay Kamath x-6383
Phillips Hall

Christine Miller x-5217
Millikan Hall

Help Desk x-1634

Help Desk Hours
M-T 8 am—10 pm
Fri 8 am—5 pm
Sat 11 am—4:45 pm
Sun 1 pm—10 pm

Bigger is Better

USB flash drives, also called pen or jump drives, are compact and easy-to-use devices. These drives serve a similar storage purpose to that of a computer hard drive.

Flash drives make data storage and sharing easy, making floppy disks a thing of the past. To use a USB flash drive, plug it into the USB port of any computer running Windows 2000 or later. The drive should then be ready to use.

If you are running Windows 98, you may need to install software drivers for the USB flash drive before you plug it into the USB port. To determine if additional drivers are needed, read the documentation that comes with your flash drive.

Prices range from \$23 for a 128MB to about \$100 for a 1GB of storage. Visit www.newegg.com or go to your favorite computer store to purchase a flash drive.

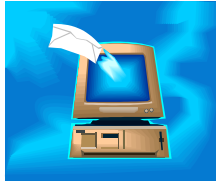


SanDisk drives are compatible with and recommended for use on Northwest computers. If you are planning on using the drive in one of the campus computer labs, it is strongly recommended that you do not purchase a secure drive.

Email Etiquette and More...

Do you think it's easy? Think again.

Writing the perfect email is not as easy as you might think. There are basic guidelines that one should follow to write an appropriate email message. Both in college and in your professional career, you must pay attention to detail while emailing your peers, professors, or employers.



The following email etiquette guidelines are from the Northwest Computer User's Guide to the Electronic Campus, 2004-2005.

- Do not mail-bomb other systems or users.
- Chain-letters are against university policy.
- Mass mail messages require prior approval

After Thanksgiving Sales... YEA!

Thanksgiving is gone and its best part comes — the after Thanksgiving sales in preparation for Christmas. Come on, admit it. It's not just seeing your family that excites you; it's also the sales. The sales are the best time to buy electronics, including computers and accessories. But wait! Don't go running out to buy the first thing you see. Make sure you are getting what you need. These are a few things you need to take into consideration:

- *Laptop or desktop?* Do you want a machine you can take to class or work? Or do you just need something that stays in one place?
- *MAC or PC?* If you work with graphic arts, rendering video, or yearbook/journalism projects, then a MAC is the best choice. On the other hand, PC's are more widely utilized. Therefore, more applications tend to be designed for PC's.
- *XP Home or Professional?* If you plan to connect your PC to a network, such as the Northwest network, then you should use XP Professional. XP Home is fine for all

from Student Affairs for student recipients and Human Resources for faculty and staff recipients.

- Always keep your email short and to the point.
- The use of correct grammar and spelling is very important.
- Use the Subject line when sending a message to aid the recipient in responding to the email message.
- Use upper and lower case properly in your message. Typing in all upper case is understood as yelling.
- Send emails only to people to whom the content will be relevant.
- Be polite and do NOT use threatening or abusive terms in your messages. 🐾

By Akshay Kamath
Phillips Hall PERT

other purposes. Also notice that you can still connect to the Northwest network using XP Home.

- *Recreational or professional?* Are you a PC gamer? Or do you just use the computer for educational or work purposes? You can get high tech gear to improve your gaming experience or you can purchase accessories or software to enhance your professional or academic experience.

When shopping for a new computer or accessories, check out the different bundles and upgrades offered by the merchants. Many of the bundles are geared towards different needs such as gaming, digital photography, and small business or household needs.

Buying a PC is an investment that will be with you for a couple of years, so do your research before you take the plunge. If you bring your PC on campus, make sure you get it configured correctly. Ask a PERT how to configure it to keep from violating any Northwest computing policies. 🐾

Preview for Next Month...

Don't miss next month's edition, where you can learn about legal downloadable music.

Technically Speaking is a monthly PERT Newsletter for residents in Dieterich, Millikan, Franken, and Phillips Halls.

This publication is written and produced by the PERT staff. All text and graphics are © 2004 by Northwest Missouri State University's Information Systems and their respective copyright holders.