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SPRING 2005 NEWSLETTER

RECOMMENDED INTERNET EXPLORER SETTINGS – Many people don't realize they can change their homepage, which is the webpage automatically loaded when you launch your web browser. Go to the desired webpage, then click on the Tools menu at the top and select Internet Options. In the General tab, click on the Use Current button. www.google.com is a popular choice because it loads quickly. If you prefer not to have a homepage, just click on the Use Blank button. The procedure to set your homepage is similar in other browsers such as Netscape, Safari and Firefox (if you don't see a Use Current feature, just type the URL manually).

If you mis-type a URL in the Address bar, by default Internet Explorer will jump to MSN Search. We find this annoying and prefer to keep what we typed in the Address bar so we can edit it. Click on the Tools menu at the top and select Internet Options, then select the Advanced tab. Scroll down to the Search from the Address bar section, and select Do not search from the Address bar.

RECOMMENDED OUTLOOK EXPRESS SETTINGS – There are several default settings in Outlook Express that virtually everyone changes if they know how. For example, going directly to your Inbox, and allowing file attachments. From the Tools menu at the top, click on Options, then make the following changes:

- In the General tab, select the first checkbox "When starting, go directly to my 'Inbox' folder".
- Change "Check for new messages every 30 minutes" to something shorter like 10 or 15 minutes.
- In the Read tab, remove the checkmark from "Mark message read after displaying for 5 seconds".
- In the Security tab, remove the checkmark from "Do not allow attachments to be saved or opened that could potentially be a virus".

OUTLOOK EXPRESS NOT IN START MENU – Windows XP lets you set which web browser and email programs are shown in the Start menu. Normally you will see icons for Internet Explorer and Outlook Express. But after installing software you may instead see America Online, MSN Explorer, Microsoft Office Outlook, etc. Or perhaps you prefer to have Firefox and Thunderbird in your Start menu.

Right-click on the Start button and select Properties. Go to the Start Menu tab and click on the Customize button. Underneath "Show on Start menu" you will see "Internet:" and "E-mail" checkboxes to enable display of the icons in the Start menu. To the right of the checkboxes, there are drop-down menus to select from a list of installed web browser and email programs.

You can also select your default web browser and email program for use when another program needs to display web pages or send email. From Control Panel, double-click on Add or Remove Programs, then click on Set Program Access and Defaults.

OUTGOING MAILSERVER – If you connect to the Internet though KWOM, you can use mail.kwom.com as your outgoing mailserver. If you connect through another ISP and have a static IP address, we can enter that IP address in our mailserver firewall. Otherwise, you should use your Internet connection provider's outgoing mailserver.

For a Comcast connection the outgoing mailserver is smtp.comcast.net. The WOW! setting will be either smtp.mail.wideopenwest.com or smtp.mail.wowway.com. For SBC/Yahoo! DSL, things get a little more complicated – you need to check the table at http://help.sbcglobal.net/article.php?item=287.

SBC has recently implemented "Port 25 blocking" to prevent their residential (dynamic IP) DSL customers from using non-SBC mailservers. See the article at http://help.sbcglobal.net/article.php?item=4640 for more details. You must either use the SBC mailservers for sending mail, or opt out of Port 25 blocking with the form at http://help.sbcglobal.net/servabuse.php.

PASSWORDS HIDDEN BY ASTERISKS – Many people tell us the password stored on their computer must be wrong because the number of asterisks isn't the same as the length of their password. Pay no attention to the number of asterisks, it won't necessarily match the length of your password. The idea is not to help someone guess your password by giving away the length.

Another annoyance is trying to recover the password hidden behind the asterisks. Maybe you are trying to set up a new computer and you have forgotten your password. Your computer knows it, but won't display it. Try the Asterisk Key program from http://www.lostpassword.com/asterisk.htm, this program is free but the same website has many other password recovery utilities. For example, if you have password protected an Outlook Express Identity and forgotten the password, you will need a utility to access or even delete the Identity.

THUNDERBIRD 1.0 – In our last newsletter, we noted that Mozilla had released Firefox 1.0, a very popular alternative to Internet Explorer, but that the companion email program Thunderbird was still in beta. Thunderbird 1.0 has now been released. Both Firefox and Thunderbird are available as free downloads from http://www.mozilla.org.

NO DIALTONE – Sometimes we get calls from dialup customers asking if we are having problems, because they got an error message saying no dialtone was detected. Actually this occurs before your modem ever dials our access number, and it means the modem didn't hear any dialtone when it picked up your phoneline. Usually it means the phoneline is in use, or not working, or the phone cable is unplugged from the modem. It can also occur if you have voicemail waiting, and the modem interprets the "stutter dial" tone (beep-beep-beep-BEEEEEEEEEEP) as no dialtone. Retrieve your voicemail and try again.

HANG UP AFTER SEND & RECEIVE – We regularly get calls from customers whose Outlook Express settings somehow got changed to hang up the modem after sending & receiving mail. This can be particularly troublesome if you have Norton Antivirus set to scan outgoing mail, because the modem connection to the Internet gets disconnected up while NAV is still scanning the outgoing mail. In Outlook Express, click on the Tools menu and select Options. In the Connection tab, make sure "Hang up after sending and receiving" is not checked.

DIAL AUTOMATICALLY WHEN NEEDED – Another setting that seems to get mysteriously changed in Windows is the option to automatically dial your default Internet connection when a program like Internet Explorer or Outlook Express needs to access the Internet. Go to Internet Options from the Tools menu in Internet Explorer (or from Control Panel). In the Connections tab, make sure "Always dial my default connection" is selected. If your KWOM connection is not shown as the Default, click to highlight it and then click on the "Set Default" button.

DON'T TRUST FROM & TO LINES – Most spam and virus-infected email has a fake "From" address, so you should not trust email just because it appears to come from someone you trust. Similarly, you should not blame the apparent sender if you receive unwanted emails. Sometimes we get calls from customers asking why we sent them spam or a virus, because the email claims to be from an address like support@kwom.com, or from "your kwom.com support team". This is the result of bulk email or virus software taking the domain name from your email address and inventing an official-sounding fake sender at that same domain name. Another technique is to use your address as the sender, the purpose of course is to gain your trust or pique your curiosity and trick you into opening the email.

The "To" address can also be deceptive. Sometimes customers call saying they are receiving email that is not addressed to them. You may not be the primary recipient, but if the email was delivered to your mailbox, you were somewhere on the recipient list (probably as cc: or bcc:). Spammers often sort their list by domain name and send one email to multiple recipients at that domain name. One of the recipients will be listed as the "To" address, the rest will be in the copy list. Or they may put a nice-sounding fake name in the "To" field, making it look like you were fortunate enough to accidentally receive the stock tip or mortgage deal intended for Brock B. Engel or Epilepsy D. Lovesick.

LEAVE MAIL ON SERVER – For most people there is no advantage to leaving copies of retrieved mail on the mailserver. This will only slow down checking for new mail and take up storage space on the server. It may be useful however if you check your mail from more than one computer, or if you use WebMail while away from your primary computer.

In Outlook Express, click on the Tools menu at the top, and select Accounts. In the Mail tab, select your mail account, and click on the Properties button at the right. In the Advanced tab, place checkmarks next to "Leave a copy of messages on server" and "Remove from server after 5 days". Note this must be done on both computers, otherwise Outlook Express will delete mail from the server after it has been successfully downloaded. Make sure at least one of your computers is set to delete the copies from the server after a reasonable period of time (5 to 10 days) or you will have problems with too much old mail on the server.