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Life After Y2K

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Find Fast

If you have installed any *Microsoft* "Office" products, you have also installed a utility called "Find Fast."

What is it?

Find Fast is a utility that automatically runs at defined intervals to create a "log file" of all Office documents found on your system. The theory is when you open an Office document, the program first checks the "log" to locate the file. This is supposed to speed up the opening process. By default, the time interval is set to every two hours and log files are created in the root directory of each drive letter on your system.

How come I don't see it run?

The utility runs in "background" and nothing is displayed on the screen during its execution. You will notice considerable disk activity when it is running and your computer runs much slower. Have you ever wondered, when you are doing practically nothing on your

computer, that all of a sudden it seems to go berserk and is very active? The guess is "Find Fast" is checking the drive for Office documents and re-creating the log file.

Does it help anything?

Not really. Unless you are constantly opening documents, there is no benefit. If you are storing your documents on a file server, Find Fast probably won't do a darn thing. By default, it only scans the files on your local drive.

Does it hurt anything?

Yes, it slows down your system every time it runs. It uses a chunk of memory that could be utilized for something else. If you have a CD creator, this can actually cause a failure in creating the CD due to an interruption in the data stream to the CD.

How do I know if its active?

The simplest method is to hold down the Ctrl+ Alt keys and press the Del key to display a list of currently running programs. If Find

Fast is on the list, it is active. This doesn't mean it is running currently, but means it is scheduled to run. *Just click on the "Cancel" button to exit.*

How to Configure

The configuration tool can be found in the Control Panel. Click on Start, Settings, Control Panel and double click on the "Find Fast" icon. From here you can change the interval time or cause it to re-create the log file (re-create index). **You can also stop it by clicking on Index, Close and Stop.** *Note that this method of stopping only lasts until the next time you re-boot your machine.*

How to Really Stop

To permanently close, click on Start, Settings, Task Bar and the Start Menu. In the new window, click on the "Start Menu Programs" and "Advanced" button. In the "Explorer window", double click on the "Start Menu". In the right-hand window, there will be a Find Fast selection. Click on it once and press the delete key.

From Microsoft

Of interest is that even though Microsoft created this utility and automatically installs it, in the Sept/Oct 99 issue of **Microsoft Insider** there is an article "Boost your PC's performance by turning off Find Fast." I think someone at Microsoft has too much time on their hands.

Don't Assume

When was the last time you checked that your daily backup was running correctly? **If it wasn't today, then it is too late!**

Checking the backup status every day becomes a boring task. There is no excitement if everything is working correctly. There is excitement if you have a disk or file failure and need to restore data - unfortunately the wrong kind of excitement.

For backing up Unix systems (SCO, AIX and Linux) we recommend **Backup Edge**. This tool can provide both an email message and printed copy of the backup status. If you are using Backup Edge, make sure you read the message. Don't assume that just because there is a message, everything is okay. **Read the message!**

If you are not using Backup Edge, you should have some method of checking your backup status. If you are not sure, call us.

Security Warning

Many ISP's and Cable companies are advertising using DSL or a Cable modem for an Internet connection. We agree with their recommendations that a DSL or Cable modem connection to the Internet is faster and usually cheaper than a dial-up or ISDN

connection method. **What these companies don't warn you about is the major security hole that is exposed.** A dedicated and always "on" connection to the Internet allows hackers plenty of time to try to break into your system.

Windows 95 and 98 have security holes that will allow hackers to access your computer without you knowing. *As the purpose of this article is to warn you of this situation, I am not getting into the detail of what they can do.* Suffice it to say that they can infect your system with viruses, delete files, destroy the operating system and capture anything you type on the keyboard. This last capability is extremely dangerous. By capturing what you type, they can discover any passwords, logins, credit card info, etc. that you use.

In a business environment, we are able to protect against this situation by using a Linux system as a gateway to the Internet and setting up an internal network and firewall to prevent a hacker's access.

In a home situation, with a single Windows PC, you are exposed. **Don't assume that your system will not be accessed. Assume that sooner or later, someone will break into your system! Probably sooner!**

There are firewall utilities that can be installed on a Windows PC to prevent access. At this point we have not researched their

effectiveness. *If any reader is using any of these utilities, we would be interested in working with you to verify how well they work.*

We use utilities to check a system to see how vulnerable it is. It lists all of the security holes and provides a rating between 0 and 999999 as to the possibilities of someone hacking your system. The lower the value, the more you are exposed. On Linux systems that we have installed, we get a rating of 999998 to 999999.

Keep in mind that the same utilities we use to check security holes are used by hackers to determine how they can break into your system. The hacker world is growing, not shrinking. You have been warned!

AOL 5.0

It appears that AOL version 5.0 has caused headaches for users who have upgraded to or installed this version. Here is a short list of some of the reported problems . . .

- ✓ Can't access some Internet sites.
- ✓ System freeze-up
- ✓ Sudden disconnects from the Internet
- ✓ Can't use NetZero or Freei.Net
- ✓ Get the Blue screen of death
- ✓ Remote users can't connect to the company's network.

The other major problem is that there is no complete removal utility. The only way to remove it is to erase your drive and reinstall Windows

and your applications from scratch.

Access 2000

Access 2000 is the latest version from Microsoft. It can be purchased as a standalone product or as part of the Office 2000 Pro suite. **If you are using Access 97, we recommended staying with it.**

Why?

- ✓ The main reason is that Access **2000 operates slower** than the 97 version.
- ✓ 2000 version requires more memory.
- ✓ There are **not** any major benefits.
- ✓ 2000 version requires purchase of new software.
- ✓ Requires conversion of your databases.
- ✓ May require fixing or update code.

Of note is that Microsoft has stopped providing Office 97 Pro. They are pushing the 2000 version. In the past, after newer versions were introduced, you could still purchase older versions for an extended period of time. So what do you do if your using Access 97 and you buy a new PC that needs a license copy of Office 97 Pro or Access 97? You can use an existing CD for the 97 version. To stay legal, you need to purchase a new license copy for the 2000 version, but don't install the 2000 version.

Some customers have purchased

new PC's that already have the 2000 version installed. In most situations, to stay compatible with older machines running the 97 version, you will need to remove the 2000 version and install the 97 version. Sounds like a simple task? Nope!

The removal utility, provided with the 2000 version, does not correctly remove it. We have found another utility on Microsoft's site that is supposed to remove it correctly. *Well, almost correctly.* What happens is that it also removes several fonts that are needed. You would think that if you install the 97 version, it would reinstall the fonts. *Wrong again!* The fonts that are removed are standard Windows fonts that need to be reinstalled from the W95 or W98 CD.

The Value of Time

To realize the value of one . . .
 YEAR, ask a student who has failed his exam.
 MONTH, ask a mother who has given birth to a pre-mature baby.
 WEEK, ask an editor of a weekly.
 DAY, ask a daily wage earner.
 HOUR, ask the lovers waiting to meet.
 MINUTE, ask a person who has missed the train.
 SECOND, ask a person who has survived an accident.
 MILLI-SECOND, ask the person who has won a silver medal.

MICRO-SECOND, ask a NASA scientist.

NANO-SECOND, ask a hardware engineer.

And if you still don't realize the value of time you must be a Software Engineer!

Keep Thinking Positive

Jerry is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say. When asked how he was doing, he would reply, "If I was doing any better, I would be twins!"

When Jerry was asked, "How do you do it?", he replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood. When something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. When someone comes complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side

of life. I choose the positive side of life. Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people will affect your mood. **The bottom line: It's your choice how you live life.**"

Years later, Jerry was held up at gun point by three armed robbers who panicked and shot him. Jerry was found relatively quickly and rushed to the local trauma center. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Jerry was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullets still in his body.

Six months later he was asked how he was, he replied, "If I were any better, I'd be twins." He was asked what had gone through his mind as the robbery took place. "The first thing was that I should have locked the back door," Jerry replied. Then, as I lay on the floor, I remembered that I had two choices; I could choose to live or I could choose to

die. I chose to live. The paramedics kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read "He's a dead man". I knew I needed to take action."

There was a nurse shouting questions at me, and asked if I was allergic to anything. "Yes", I replied. The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, "Bullets!" Over their laughter, I told them "I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead." Jerry lived thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude.

What can we learn from Jerry? That every day we have the choice to live fully. Attitude, after all, is almost everything.