

Contents

Acknowledgments	xiii
Introduction	xv

Part I: Customizing Your Computer

Chapter 1: Customizing the Look of the Startup	3
Customizing the Boot Screen	3
Activating the hidden boot screen	3
Customizing the boot screen image	5
Customizing the Logon Screen	7
Changing user pictures	8
Hiding users on the Logon screen	10
Clearing the last user logon	10
Changing the Logon screen screensaver	12
Displaying a security message	13
Enabling Num Lock on by default	14
Changing the Logon screen background	15
Summary	16
Chapter 2: Customizing User Navigation	17
Customizing the Start Panel	17
Customizing navigation shortcuts	18
Customizing the Frequently Run Programs list	20
Customizing the program list and search	25
Customizing the Classic Start Menu	27
Activating the classic Start menu	27
Customizing classic Start menu icons	28
Customizing the program list	30
Customizing the Taskbar	32
Taskbar animations	32
Program grouping	32
Adjusting Aero preview images	33
Quick launching your programs	34
Modifying the taskbar location	35
Customizing the system tray	37
Using the Group Policy Editor to Customize the Start Menu and Taskbar	39
Setting policies with the Group Policy Editor	39
Start panel (and menu) and taskbar policies	41
Summary	44

Chapter 3: Hacking the Desktop	45
Customizing the Desktop Icons	45
Removing all icons from the desktop	45
Customizing the icon drop shadow effect.	46
Displaying Windows system and user icons on the desktop	47
Adjusting the size of desktop icons	48
Renaming the Recycle Bin	48
Removing the shortcut arrow from icons on the desktop.	48
Customizing the icons	50
Customizing the Desktop	51
Animating your desktop	51
Using Windows Sidebar	53
Summary.	60
Chapter 4: Customizing the Appearance of the Windows Interface.	61
Working with Themes	61
Changing the current theme	62
Making your own theme	63
Customizing Aero Glass.	70
Enabling Aero Glass on slower hardware.	71
Tweaking the color of Aero Glass.	72
Changing the Aero Glass borders.	74
Disabling animations	75
Disabling Aero Glass	76
Skinning Windows Vista	76
Using hacked visual styles.	76
Changing the look of Windows Vista via WindowBlinds	78
Adding more skins for WindowBlinds	80
Summary.	80
Chapter 5: Hacking Windows Explorer	81
Customizing Window Layout.	81
Customizing Panes	81
Hacking Search	84
Hacking File Associations	87
Changing the default launch app	88
Hacking the Context Menu.	89
Customizing Your Folders	91
Changing a folder icon and picture	91
Changing the template of a folder	92
Customizing the folder view	93
Applying your settings to all folders	96
Working with Hidden Files	96
Showing hidden files	96
Revealing the super hidden files	98
Summary.	98

Chapter 6: Customizing IE7	99
Customizing Search	99
Adding popular search engines	99
Managing your configured search engines	100
Adding custom search entries	101
Creating Registry files to import sites to search	102
Tweaking the Tabs	103
Tab keyboard shortcuts	103
Multitab home pages	104
Customizing tabs	105
Fun with RSS	107
Subscribing to feeds	107
Viewing your IE-subscribed RSS feeds on the Sidebar	108
Customizing feed settings	109
Using Add-Ons in Internet Explorer	109
Using ieSpell	110
Using RoboForm	110
Summary	110
Chapter 7: Customizing Windows Media	111
Adjusting Your Audio Experience	111
Bass Boost	112
Virtual Surround	113
Room Correction	113
Loudness Equalization	115
Headphone Virtualization	115
Customizing Windows Media Player 11	115
Tweaking the UI	115
Sharing your library	116
Using audio effects	118
Customizing Media Center	119
Turning your PC into a DVR	119
Summary	125

Part II: Increasing Your System's Performance

Chapter 8: Analyzing Your System	129
Monitoring Your System Hardware	129
Using the Reliability and Performance Monitor	130
Using Event Viewer	140
Using Task Manager	143
Other performance monitoring utilities	145
Benchmarking Your System	146
Windows System Performance Rating	147
Benchmarking with PCMark05	149
Summary	151

Chapter 9: Speeding Up the System Boot	153
Working with the BIOS	153
Changing the boot order of your drives	154
Using the Quick Boot feature of the BIOS	156
Modifying the Operating System Boot	157
Windows Boot Manager.	157
Disabling the system boot screen	160
Disabling unneeded hardware devices	162
Removing extra fonts for speed	164
Disabling unneeded services	166
Optimizing the location of the boot files	179
Summary	182
Chapter 10: Making Your Computer Log On Faster	183
Speeding Up the Logon	183
Enabling automatic logon	184
Adjusting the startup programs	185
Customizing auto-start programs for other users	193
Other Time-Saving Tips	194
Assigning alternative IP addresses.	194
Turning off the logon music	196
Summary	197
Chapter 11: Speeding Up Windows Explorer	199
Speeding Up File Browsing and Access	199
Disabling legacy filename creation.	200
Disabling the file access timestamp	203
Adjusting NTFS memory allocation	204
Speeding Up the User Interface	206
Fine-tuning performance options	206
Adjusting animations	207
Disabling Aero Glass for faster performance	212
Windows Classic look for maximum performance	213
Adjusting Explorer's Search	215
Adjusting the search scope.	215
Adjusting the Windows indexing service	216
Using Windows Search without an index	217
Summary	218
Chapter 12: Optimizing Windows Core Components	219
Giving Vista More RAM	219
Adding RAM to your computer.	220
Using a USB storage device to add memory.	222
Tweaking the Paging File	223
Disabling the paging file.	224
Adjusting the size of the paging file	226
Changing the location of the paging file	228

Defragmenting Your Hard Drive	229
Defragmenting the Windows paging file	230
Defragmenting the NTFS master file table	230
Adjusting Your Application Priorities	230
Using Task Manager to adjust priorities	231
Starting applications with a user set priority	232
Using WinTasks to profile your priorities	233
Summary	235

Chapter 13: Speeding Up Your Web Browser and Network Connection. . . 237

Optimizing Your Web Browser.	237
Speeding up Internet Explorer.	237
Speeding up Firefox	240
Accelerating your downloads	241
Speeding Up Your Network Connection.	245
Disabling unneeded protocols	245
Summary	247

Part III: Securing Your System

Chapter 14: Windows Security 251

Actively Protecting Your Computer	251
Staying up-to-date	252
Updating Windows Vista	253
Active security tips	254
Controlling Your Computer Accounts	256
Managing user accounts	256
Tweaking User Account Control	262
Using File Encryption	266
Encrypting your files.	266
Using BitLocker Drive Encryption	269
Summary	273

Chapter 15: Internet Security 275

Analyzing Your Security	275
Testing Internet security	275
Security Center	277
Using a Firewall	278
Using the Windows Vista firewall	278
Web Browser Security	282
Internet Explorer 7	282
Defending Against Spyware and Malware	285
Using Windows Defender	285
Using Antivirus Software.	287
Using avast! antivirus software.	288
Summary	289

Chapter 16: Protecting Your Privacy	291
Internet Explorer Privacy.	291
Removing address bar suggestions	291
Clearing temporary Internet files, history, and cookies	293
Adjusting your cookie security policy	294
Saying no to encrypted Web pages	295
Disabling AutoComplete	296
Clearing temporary Internet files automatically.	297
Windows Interface Privacy.	298
Clearing Frequently Run Programs and the Open files list	298
Removing temporary files from your hard drive.	299
Removing saved passwords	301
Setting file and folder permissions.	302
Summary	304
 Index	 305