

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: The Nuts & Bolts of Hacks & Mods</i>	7
Chapter 1: Windows XP: What's Not to Love?	9
Chapter 2: Tools of the Hacking Trade	17
Chapter 3: A Quick XP Makeover	25
<i>Part II: Controlling the Look and Feel of Windows XP</i> ...	45
Chapter 4: TweakUI, the Power User's PowerToy	47
Chapter 5: Pinning Down the Start Menu	57
Chapter 6: Taking On the Taskbar	85
Chapter 7: Decking Out the Desktop	97
<i>Part III: Adjusting Everyday Activities</i>	113
Chapter 8: Reining In Windows Explorer	115
Chapter 9: Cool Keyboard Hacks and Menu Mods	129
Chapter 10: Searching on the Desktop	139
Chapter 11: Switching to Better Online Software	151
Chapter 12: Pulling Off Pictures	173
<i>Part IV: Modding to Monitor and Manage</i>	191
Chapter 13: Seeing What's Happening	193
Chapter 14: Decoding IDs, Accounts, and Passwords	209
Chapter 15: Using Remote Assistance	225
Chapter 16: Retooling Disks	237
<i>Part V: Protecting Yourself (And Your PC)</i>	247
Chapter 17: Changing (In)Security Settings	249
Chapter 18: Taking the "Mal" out of Malware	261
Chapter 19: Keeping Your Privates Private	271
<i>Part VI: Entertaining Yourself</i>	283
Chapter 20: Making the Most of Media Player	285
Chapter 21: Buying Music and Videos	293
Chapter 22: Trading Music and Videos	305
Chapter 23: Getting Games to Work	311

<i>Part VII: The Part of Tens</i>	319
Chapter 24: Ten Steps to Mastering the Registry	321
Chapter 25: Ten Speed-Up Hacks — Maybe	333
<i>Index</i>	347

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
What You're Not to Read	3
Foolish Assumptions	3
How This Book Is Organized	3
Part I: The Nuts & Bolts of Hacks & Mods	3
Part II: Controlling the Look and Feel of Windows XP	4
Part III: Adjusting Everyday Activities	4
Part IV: Modding to Monitor and Manage	4
Part V: Protecting Yourself (And Your PC)	4
Part VI: Entertaining Yourself	4
Part VII: The Part of Tens	4
Icons Used in This Book	5
Where to Go from Here	5
<i>Part I: The Nuts & Bolts of Hacks & Mods</i>	7
Chapter 1: Windows XP: What's Not to Love?	9
Well, Perhaps There's Room for Improvement	9
When to Hack Windows XP — and When to Let It Be	10
Hacks that don't work	11
Keeping hacks and mods in perspective	12
A Quick Look at Some Cool XP Hacks and Mods	13
Staying Safe and Sound While You Work	14
Chapter 2: Tools of the Hacking Trade	17
Understanding How Windows Hangs Together	17
A world of processes	17
Windows as referee	19
Amoebus interruptus	20
Programs talk, talk, talk	21
The Role of the Registry	21
Great Sources for Hacking Tools	23
Chapter 3: A Quick XP Makeover	25
Do You Need a Makeover?	25
Security Check — NOW	26
Get up-to-date	26
Check your firewall	30

Fire your antivirus program	32
Show filename extensions	33
Protect against spyware	34
Personalize Your eXPerience	35
Change the wallpaper	35
Set the screensaver	36
Align your accounts	37
Eliminate the Obnoxious	38
Tame (or trash!) Messenger	38
Remove the Language Bar	40
Get Better (Free!) Software	41
Dump Microsoft's browser	41
Search like a pro	41
Read PDFs	43

Part II: Controlling the Look and Feel of Windows XP ...45

Chapter 4: TweakUI, the Power User's PowerToy 47

Downloading and Installing TweakUI	48
TweakUI from 30,000 Feet	50
Knowing the Essential TweakUI Lingo	51
Squeezing TweakUI	52
Making your mouse sensitive	52
Changing places	54
Disabling Autoplay	55

Chapter 5: Pinning Down the Start Menu 57

Scoping Out the Start Menu	58
Customizing the Left Side of the Start Menu	60
Pinning the Tail on This Donkey	62
Pinning a program	63
Pinning a folder	65
Pinning a file	66
Pinning a Web page	67
Renaming, moving, and unpinning	68
Controlling the Frequently Used Programs List	70
Rearranging All Programs	73
Controlling the My Recent Documents List	78
Advanced Start Tweaks	80

Chapter 6: Taking On the Taskbar 85

Customizing the Taskbar	86
Sizing the Taskbar	87
Taming the System Tray	88
Controlling Groups of Buttons	90

Modifying Quick Launch91
 Deleting Quick Launch icons92
 Adding programs to Quick Launch92
 Adding folders and files to Quick Launch93
 Adding Web pages to Quick Launch94
 Making room for more icons94
 Changing Quick Launch screen tips95
 Changing Quick Launch icons96

Chapter 7: Decking Out the Desktop97

Making Your Desktop Home97
 Wrangling with Icons99
 Exploring and installing Iconoid100
 “Snapping” icons to Windows’ invisible grid101
 Autoarranging icons101
 Moving all icons to the upper-left corner of the screen102
 Working with Themes102
 Using a purpose-built installer103
 Installing a Theme manually104
 Getting the Most from ClearType108
 Understanding ClearType108
 Modifying ClearType109

Part III: Adjusting Everyday Activities 113

Chapter 8: Reining In Windows Explorer115

Fixing Key Explorer Settings115
 How programs start115
 Changing filename extension associations116
 Showing filename extensions and hidden/system files118
 Setting File Folder Templates121
 Setting a folder’s template122
 Curing template amnesia by setting aside extra memory123
 Customizing Shortcuts124
 Renaming Files en Masse126

Chapter 9: Cool Keyboard Hacks and Menu Mods129

Listing Files in a Folder129
 Copy to Folder and Move to Folder134
 Creating Custom Keyboard Shortcuts136
 Key Combinations You Need to Know137

Chapter 10: Searching on the Desktop139

The Lowdown on Searching139
 Installing Google Desktop Search141
 Running Google Desktop Search143

Google Desktop Search Mods	145
Preventing GDS from indexing specific files	145
Removing files from the index	146
Moving GDS's index file	148
Chapter 11: Switching to Better Online Software	151
Surfing with the Fox	151
Installing Firefox	152
Working with tabs	154
Installing extensions	156
Hacking and modding Firefox	160
Keyboard shortcuts for Firefox and IE	163
Printing a page in Firefox and IE	164
IMing with Trillian	165
Installing Trillian	166
Adding contacts with Trillian	167
Disabling MSN Messenger	169
Shutting down MSN Messenger the polite way	170
Shutting down MSN Messenger the IMpolite way	171
Chapter 12: Pulling Off Pictures	173
Removing Problematic Camera Software	173
Transferring Pictures from a Camera	175
Copying from a Camera Memory Card	179
Rummaging Through New Photos	181
Undeleting Images on a Camera	182
Resizing Pictures	185
Converting Picture File Formats	188
Changing file formats with Paint	189
Saving the contents of the Clipboard as a picture file	189
<i>Part IV: Modding to Monitor and Manage</i>	<i>191</i>
Chapter 13: Seeing What's Happening	193
Using Windows Event Viewer	193
Opening the event logs from the Start menu	194
Poking around Windows Event Viewer	195
Saving a log file	198
Hardware Troubleshooting with Windows Device Manager	199
Making it easy to start Device Manager	199
Taking full advantage of Device Manager views	200
Looking up Device Manager error codes	200
Check for "ghosted" hardware	200
Controlling Applications with Task Manager	202
Tracking Memory with Task Manager	204
Tracking CPU Usage with Task Manager	206

Chapter 14: Decoding IDs, Accounts, and Passwords209

- Activating and Reactivating Windows209
 - Activating shrink-wrapped Windows210
 - Dealing with preinstalled Windows211
 - Using volume licenses213
- Changing Registered User and Organization215
- Tweaking User Accounts217
 - Working with Guest218
 - Changing usernames219
 - Showing/hiding accounts at logon219
 - Changing the picture221
- Bypassing the Windows Welcome screen222

Chapter 15: Using Remote Assistance225

- Helping a Friend — Long Distance225
- Asking for Help226
 - Connecting via MSN or Windows Messenger227
 - Connecting via e-mail or by file231
- Poking Through the Firewalls233
- Setting Up RA So That You Can Always Use It234

Chapter 16: Retooling Disks237

- Installing a Second Hard Drive237
- Reassigning Drive Letters241
- Converting a FAT Disk to NTFS243
 - Finding out what kind of drive you have243
 - Converting FAT32 to NTFS244
- Maintenance Hacks245
 - Stifling the disk cleanup warning245
 - Forcing a defrag246

Part V: Protecting Yourself (And Your PC)247

Chapter 17: Changing (In)Security Settings249

- Don't Let Microsoft Muck with Your Computer249
 - Patch Keystone Kops250
 - What is a critical patch?250
 - Turning off automatic updating251
- Analyzing Updates253
- Applying Updates254
- Dealing with Windows Firewall256
 - Setting up Windows Firewall256
 - Testing your firewall258

Chapter 18: Taking the “Mal” out of Malware	261
Catching Viruses Free	261
Installing AVG Free	262
Adjusting AVG Free settings	263
Fighting Spyware	264
Using Microsoft Antispyware	265
Running CounterSpy	265
Blocking your Registry with Mike Lin’s StartupMonitor	267
Startup sleuthing	268
Chapter 19: Keeping Your Privates Private	271
Covering Your Tracks Online	271
Anonymous surfing	272
Browser amnesia	273
Covering Your Tracks in Windows	277
Protecting from prying eyes	277
Clobbering the MRU lists	278
Keeping Windows from phoning home	280
 Part VI: Entertaining Yourself	 283
Chapter 20: Making the Most of Media Player	285
Knowing Your File Format\$	285
Installing the Latest Windows Media Player	286
Setting Up WMP	289
Using TweakMP	290
Chapter 21: Buying Music and Videos	293
Music Restrictions	293
Rent or Buy?	295
Which Online Music Store Is Best?	295
Bypassing Restrictions	297
Windows and the iPod	302
Chapter 22: Trading Music and Videos	305
2P or Not 2P?	305
Choosing a P2P Network	306
Downloading and Installing BitTorrent	307
Finding Files in All the Wrong Places	310

Chapter 23: Getting Games to Work	311
The Gamer's Conundrum	311
Getting Ahead in Games	314
Troubleshooting Hardware Problems	315
Surviving the DirectX Experience	316
 Part VII: The Part of Tens	 319
 Chapter 24: Ten Steps to Mastering the Registry	 321
Understanding the Registry's Anatomy	322
Step 1: Understand how the Registry is like Windows Explorer	322
Step 2: Know the five high-level keys	323
Step 3: Recognize the different data types	323
Running an Example	325
Step 4: Create a Restore Point	326
Step 5: Find the key	327
Step 6: Back up the key	327
Step 7: Change, add, or delete a value	328
Step 8: Get out of the Registry	331
Step 9: Make Windows accept the change	331
Step 10: Recover if things go bump	332
 Chapter 25: Ten Speed-Up Hacks — Maybe	 333
Performance versus Pizzazz	333
Intel Application Accelerator	334
Big Memory Virtual Speedup	337
Bypassing Zip Space-Saving Calculations on Cleanup	337
Forget Creating Old-Style Names for Folders	339
Stop "Sharing" Scheduled Tasks	340
Change Location of Event Logs	341
Tweaking Communication Settings	342
Removing Negative DNS Cache Entries	344
Really Speed up Windows XP	346
 Index	 347

