

## XP Made More Useful

### XP's Folder Views

1. Open MY DOCUMENTS. Click VIEW and select Status Bar ...List and select Arrangement Icons by Name.
2. Right click on an empty spot on the My Documents menu bar and select Customize.
3. Choose any of the available Toolbar Buttons you wish and select ADD.  
(I selected the Undo, Delete, Cut, Copy, Paste, Tools Calculate.)
4. Now, click Tools on the My Documents menu bar and select Folder Options.
5. Click View tab and select Show full path, show hidden and system files, not to hide any file extensions and not to hide protected folders, plus any other settings you want.
6. Click Apply To All Folders near the top of this screen.

### Customize the XP Taskbar

1. Right click on an empty spot on the Taskbar, the one next to the START button.
2. Uncheck Lock the Taskbar.
3. Now, you may resize the different sections of the taskbar by sliding the divider lines.
4. Right click on a blank area of the taskbar again and select Toolbars and select Quick Launch. This opens an area next to Start where you may drag icons frequently used so they are always available. Such as Internet Explorer, AOL, Outlook Express, ShowDesktop, MSWord,etc.
5. When changes have been completed to the Taskbar, again rightclick and select Lock the Taskbar to prevent any accidental changes or deletions being made.

### Just Say "No" to Phoning Home

1. Right click on My Computer, select Properties.
2. Choose Automatic Updates Tab.
3. Select either Turn Off or Minimally, Notify Me.
4. Select the Advanced Tab and click Error Reporting.
5. Check "Disable error reporting", but leave "notify me when critical errors occur" checked.

### Control Your Recycle Bin & MSIE Trash

By default the Recycle Bin and MSIE want to set aside copious amounts of hard drive space for their use.

1. Right click Recycle Bin, select Properties.
2. Click the Global Tab and YOU decide how much HD space to allot for Recycle Bin. If you have a large HD, select a smaller %. For instance, I use an 80gig HD so I select 2%. This allots 1.6gig which is certainly more than I'll ever need.
3. Now, Open Microsoft Internet Explorer.
4. Click Tools and Internet Options.
5. Under Temporary Internet Files, click Settings and select a more reasonable size cache. IF using broadband 5-10Mbytes is enough. Using dialup set it to 25Mbytes. (I have mine set to 20Mbytes and I use DSL broadband)

### XP System Restore control

System Restore is a space hog. IF System Restore were truly a complete backup, but it's not. It will get the OS running again after a bad crash (if you can get to it, meaning you've gotta have those Recovery disks if the computer won't start), but it doesn't return all files to the pre-trouble state and it can't remove all traces of a program that caused the crash.

1. Right click My Computer, click Properties.
2. Click the System Restore tab.
3. Select your main drive, usually drive C: and click Settings.
4. Move the slider to a more reasonable amount of HD space. (the default is 12%, I set mine back to half that or 6%. If you make really good total backups you could move it back to 0 but I wouldn't recommend that.)
5. IF you use more than one drive, you can turn off completely the monitoring of the non-system drives.

#### XP's Virtual Memory Settings

The default, is for Windows to place 'swapfile' or 'paging file' on your C: drive and sets it to grow or shrink as is needed. This space on your HD is set aside as pseudo-RAM to use to support the Resources needed by the activity on your computer at any given time. Generally, it has always been better to allow Windows to manage the Virtual Memory because we could never get a very good handle on how it does what it does. But XP now has good info about Virtual Memory under the Help and Support.

1. Click START...Help and Support
2. In the Search box type Virtual Memory Size.
3. Read also the Related articles.

CAUTION: Be very careful about changing the space used for the Paging file. Until you understand how it works, don't make changes. And don't make changes without reading the above information.

#### XP Firewall

Xp has a built in firewall. It is very basic and blocks only INCOMING. To prove this go to [www.GRC.com](http://www.GRC.com) and run the Leaktest.

Messages such as those sent by malware to it's owners from your computer are not blocked. Only those firewalls such as Zone Alarm will block both incoming and outgoing. You should not run more than one firewall, so if you do get a 3<sup>rd</sup> party firewall, turn OFF the XP firewall at Control panel.

Other excellent tests to run to test the security of your computer system are found at [www.grc.com](http://www.grc.com) such as the Shields UP test. (I try to run these two tests at least every 6 months)

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