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UTILITIES

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THE INDEPENDENT GUIDE TO PERSONAL COMPUTING

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Tips, Tricks, & Hints



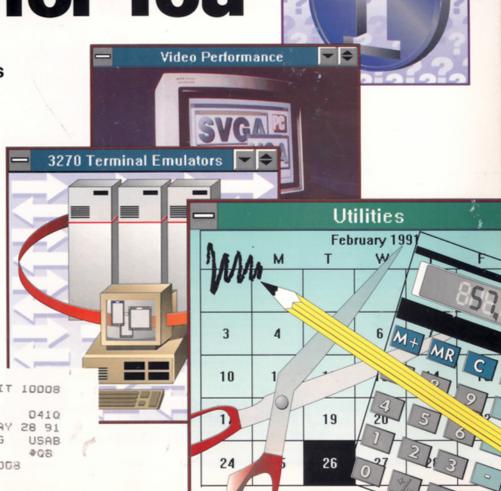
# Make Windows Work for You

35 Expert Hints, Tips, and Shortcuts

41 Utilities Fill Windows' Gaps

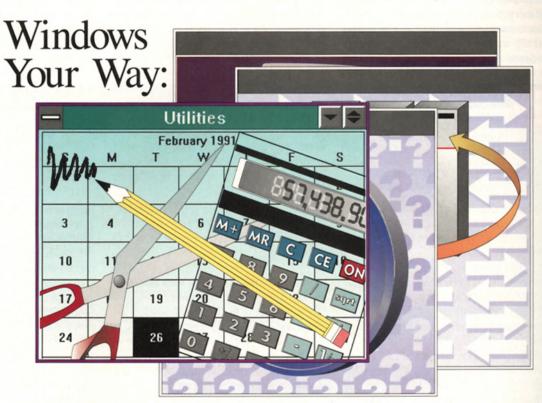
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# 41 Utilities For Windows 3.0 by Tom Unger

PC Magazine reviews over 40 utilities that make Windows more versatile, more productive, and quite simply, more useful.

Microsoft Windows 3.0 has cured most of the ills of its older versions, but its revamped interface isn't everyone's cup of tea and its built-in accessories are still so basic that you'd never dream of throwing away your steel rolodex. While the advantages of the Windows 3.0 environment may tempt you to abandon the DOS prompt entirely, you may pine for the utilities you left behind.

halls of public bulletin boards, particularly the MSWIN forum on CompuServe, and you'll find lots of useful Windows software that you can download and try for yourself.

To help you make fast work of locating the product you need, we have divided this article into several sections, each reviewing related products:

- The sections on Program Managers and File Managers encompass replacements for the two Windows 3.0 shells, as well as ancillary file and program utilities like task lists and file searchers.
- The Accessories section includes replacements and enhancements for Windows accessories: dialers, calendars, address books, and calculators, as well as system configuration and memory analysis utilities.
- The Screen and Mouse Enhancers section includes utilities to expand your desktop and tweak your mouse, as well as a variety of animated screen blankers.
- The Macro Utilities section ranges from macro recorders that replace the Windows Recorder accessory to fullfledged batch programming languages.
- The **Text Editors** section offers some more-powerful alternatives to the feeble Windows Notepad.
- The Icon Editors section covers programs that give you the ability to edit icons for your Windows programs and to create your own.
- Finally, in the Network Utilities section you'll find Windows programs that perform the functions of the user and supervisor utilities of your network operating system.

Note that some utilities fall into welldefined categories of their own and therefore aren't included in this roundup: these include personal information managers such as AllWin, YourWay, and PackRat, font managers such as Adobe Type Manager and SuperPrint, fax utilities such as WinFax, and graphics utilities such as Tiffany Plus and DoDot. Look for reviews of these types of Windows programs in subsequent issues.

The great thing about Windows is its flexibility: If you don't like something,



you can replace it easily while remaining fully confident that it will work well with other Windows applications. Where Windows lets you down, these utilities take over. It would be surprising if you don't find at least one that you'll wonder how you lived without.

# PROGRAM **MANAGEMENT** UTILITIES

by Paul Murphy

Although the Program Manager gives Windows 3.0 an attractive new face, there will always be those for whom it just isn't the answer. Some people don't like icons; others want their icons to be more powerful. Regardless of your opinion, there are plenty of commercial and shareware alternatives to the Program Manager. You can load another program as your socalled primary shell (the door you use to exit from Windows) by typing its name on the SHELL= line in your SYSTEM.INI file. Though Program Manager is the

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default, the Windows police aren't going to arrest you if you decide to hang your hat on a different shell.

Whether you choose Program Manager, File Manager, or one of the other program managers we look at here, it should fulfill its role, which is to start all of your programs in the easiest and mostefficient manner while remaining flexible and customizable enough to meet your working requirements. Most of the program managers and launchers we look at here take different approaches to the organization, display, and execution of programs, and all attempt to make your personal Windows desktop more productive. That's what working in Windows is all about.



# NEWTOOLS INC. **Aporia**

Aporia is perhaps the antithesis of the MS-DOS Executive. If you hate icons, you'll probably hate Aporia. But if the idea of a true iconic interface appeals to you, Aporia makes a superb (and, at \$50 for the shareware version, inexpensive) Windows shell.

Aporia starts out with existing Program Manager groups, creating an icon to represent each group (Desk Tools, in Aporia vernacular) and placing them right on your Windows desktop. Each Desk Tool contains the icons for the programs in that group; double-click on the Desk Tool and the program icons that belong to the group appear on your desktop. In order to run a program, you simply double-click on its icon or program tool. You can perform most other operations by clicking and dragging.

Aporia also has an assortment of other easy-to-use tools that help you manage and customize your desktop. The Trash Tool, for instance, serves as a garbage can for deleting other tools or files, similar to the Macintosh Trash Can icon. Like every other tool on the Aporia desktop, the Trash Tool has a hot zone that can interact with other tools, so if you drag a text-file tool on top of the Trash Tool, Aporia will ask if it should delete that icon and its associated file. All such "trashed" files are actually copied to a trash directory for safekeeping; when you're ready, you can remove them from the disk using the Trash Management option. This is a lot easier than cleaning your directory by going into DOS or using the File Manager.

#### **ICONS ALL OVER**

Other tools allow you to customize your desktop even further. For example, by dragging any program tool onto the Options Tool, you can change it from one of Aporia's default icons to an icon of your choice. All Aporia icons are in a proprietary format with an .AIF extension, but you can convert any Windows icon (.ICO



users-with not an icon in sight.

Since PC Magazine last looked at Command Post ("Command Post Takes Tedium out of Windows with User-Defined Menus," October 11, 1988), much has happened to Windows, especially with the introduction of the Multiple Docuback. Command Post displays the contents of directories much like the old MS-DOS Executive, but it can also display a directory tree of one or more drives, which you can use to change the current directory listing. You can run programs by choosing them from the menus that you have built or by double-clicking on their filename, though the latter method will take multiple mouse clicks to change directories, scroll the display, and doubleclick the filename.



Aporia places Desk Tools representing programs and program groups directly on your Windows desktop. Its Tree Tool displays a directory tree structure; clicking on any directory produces a file list.

or .ICN) file using Aporia's ImageMaker conversion utility.

Aporia is an impressive and complex program, and it may daunt the less intrepid Windows user. In particular, it becomes quite unwieldy if you have too many program groups with hundreds of programs. Opening more than one Desk Tool at once is also a recipe for confusion; the program tools tend to overlap each other, creating a cluttered desktop.

Still, with a little planning and periodic housecleaning, your Aporia desktop can remain quite ordered and manageable, and can be a real improvement over Program Manager's icon desktop. Best of all, it's cheap, though NewTools has announced plans to market an enhanced commercial version in the first quarter of 1991, and the price may go up then.

# WILSON WINDOWWARE **Command Post**

Command Post was originally conceived as an enhanced version of the MS-DOS Executive, and visually it carries that heritage into the Windows 3.0 era. Yet Command Post (\$49.95) offers such a great degree of utility that it remains a favorite of many long-time Windows

ment Interface. Yet Command Post flies in the face of these changes, maintaining its use of user-defined drop-down menus for the organization and execution of programs. In the current version, the batch language that controls the menus and their functions has been expanded to give you full control over how each menu selection will execute a program or do a complex task. You can even design your own dialog boxes.

Although advanced menu features may be the main attraction of Command Post. its variety of file and program management functions may keep you coming

#### FILE MANAGEMENT

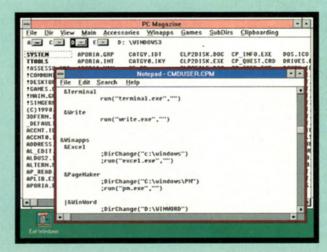
Menu choices simplify many file-management chores, however, including copying, deleting, and renaming files and directories. Window management functions tile, cascade, and arrange open windows with a menu selection; a built-in screen saver protects your monitor. A filebrowsing utility called Browser is included with Command Post and can be started through a predefined menu choice. Browser can view any file and search for text, as well as show the hexadecimal format.

Command Post's design isn't for everyone, but for those who are most comfortable with the character-based world of file listings and batch languages, it's the perfect compromise, and its programmability makes it exceptionally versatile.



## METZ SOFTWARE METZ Desktop Manager

The three shell programs (Desktop Manager, Task Manager, and Deskton Navigator) offered by METZ software share many of the same modules and are



Although its textbased menus make it seem old-fashioned. Command Post is a very powerful tool for customizing your desktop. Its menu language gives you almost 100 functions and control statements.





You choose programs in METZ Desktop Manager from a rather crude text list. You can add items to the menus manually or by using the Auto Menu Generator utility to scan your disks.

chock-full of features, including a screen saver and a file finder. Each takes a different approach to its user interface. In the case of Task Manager, the approach turns out terrific results, but the results from the lackluster Desktop Manager approach are unimpressive.

Desktop Manager (\$30) is primarily a menuing program that displays its menus on fixed list boxes. Although you can run programs by double-clicking on the ap-

propriate menu selection, it has no facility for assigning keyboard shortcuts. You can build menus automatically, but you can't use existing Program Manager groups to construct them; instead, the program must scan your hard disk for recognizable programs. The results are less than pleasing, since the entries are sorted alphabetically by filename or directory rather than in a useful order. The menu lists are text-only and contain no icons or other visual identification.

You can build menus manually using a standard set of cut-and-paste functions, but this can be a long, tedious process. It is possible to build submenus by creating separate menu files that can be linked, but this is inferior to the folder/document metaphor employed by hDC's Windows Express. As with the other METZ shells, you can also run programs from the builtin File Manager and File Finder, giving you a way to access files not listed on the menus.

On the positive side, METZ Desktop Manager comes equipped with a good range of support utilities, including the ability to password-protect menu items. But you should definitely avail yourself of the opportunity to try before you buy.



The Task List is one of the nifty items that Windows 3.0 users soon discover in their new environment. Double-click on the desktop or press Ctrl-Esc, and you get a list box that lets you switch to any running program. Imagine, however, an enhanced Task List that does everything the Micro-

## **FACT FILE**

NewTools Inc., P.O. Box 3269, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10008; 800-395-1532, 718-789-5980

List Price: \$50.

Requires: 1MB RAM, hard disk, EGA or VGA graphics adapter, Microsoft Windows 3.0, DOS 3.1 or later. Mouse recommended.

In Short: A true icon-based interface for Windows 3.0, Aporia is a real improvement over Windows 3.0's Program Manager.

CIRCLE 544 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Command Post

Wilson WindowWare 2701 California Ave. SW, #212, Seattle, WA 98116; 800-762-8383, 206-937-9335.

List Price: \$49.95 Requires: 1MB RAM, hard disk, EGA or VGA

graphics adapter, Microsoft Windows 3.0,

DOS 3.1 or later. Mouse recommended. In Short: Command Post goes against the current in its reliance on batch procedures, text menus, and file listings, but it offers a degree of customization that is hard to match.

CIRCLE 545 ON READER SERVICE CARD

METZ Desktop Manager

METZ Software, P.O. Box 6042, Bellevue, WA 98008-0042; 800-447-1712, 206-641-4525.

List Price: \$30.

Requires: 1MB RAM, hard disk, EGA or VGA graphics adapter, Microsoft Windows 3.0, DOS 3.1 or later. Mouse recommended.

In Short: A menu program that displays options on fixed list boxes, this lackluster product is weak in capabilities and tedious to customize.

CIRCLE 546 ON READER SERVICE CARD

#### SmartWin

Romberg & Romberg, 6938 Briar Cove, Dallas, TX 75240; 214-934-2025.

List Price: \$59

Requires: 1MB RAM, hard disk, EGA or VGA graphics adapter, Microsoft Windows 3.0, DOS 3.1 or later. Mouse recommended.

In Short: Offering little improvement even over the MS-DOS Executive, this unimpressive shell is

hard to recommend.

CIRCLE 548 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# **EDITORS' CHOICE**

METZ Task Manager

METZ Software, P.O. Box 6042, Bellevue, WA 98008-0042; 800-447-1712, 206-641-4525.

List Price: \$30.

Requires: 1MB RAM, hard disk, EGA or VGA graphics adapter, Microsoft Windows 3.0., DOS 3.1 or later. Mouse recommended.

In Short: One of the most practical enhancements you can buy for your Windows system, this simple but well-designed substitute for the Windows Task Manager offers a surprising degree of capability.

CIRCLE 547 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Windows Express

hDC Computer Corp., 6742 185th Ave. NE. Redmond WA 98052: 206-885-5550

List Price: \$99.95. Requires: 1MB RAM, hard disk, EGA or VGA graphics adapter,

Microsoft Windows 3.0, DOS 3.1 or later. Mouse recommended.

In Short: Windows Express replaces your icons with a folder-and-document metaphor, and will appeal to you only if you prefer a structured approach.

CIRCLE 549 ON READER SERVICE CARD

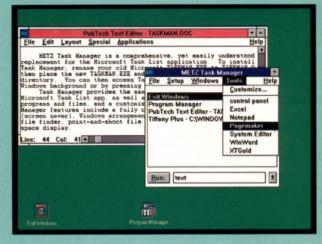
soft version does plus program and file management, and you'll have the METZ Task Manager.

METZ Task Manager replaces TASKMAN.EXE during installation, and you call it up the same way you call up the Windows Task List. The list of open applications is still visible, but the similarities stop there. A Tools menu lets you launch applications, which you assign to the menus using a simple file list box. You can also add programs to the Run box for easy access. The Task Manager's File menu contains a File Finder utility and a full-featured, yet simple, File Manager; each can be used to locate and run programs. Task Manager even has a detailed status indicator and an animated screen saver that can handle user-defined bitmaps. Amazingly, this small dynamo also includes the most complete set of window-customization commands found anywhere. It will cascade, tile, custom grid, iconize, or optimize your windows with incredible agility.

As this article was going to press, a commercial version of this product, File F/X, was offered by the ThreadZ Software Design Group of Redmond, Washington. At \$129.95 it is considerably more expensive than the shareware version, but File F/X includes a full-featured file manager, file find, text search, and undelete utilities, in addition to an enhanced Task Manager. The shareware version will still be available.

METZ Task Manager may start out as unpretentious replacement for Windows' Task List, but you may find it is usable for your primary shell. It is is one of the most practical enhancements you can buy for your Windows desktop; it's





Like the Task List it replaces, METZ Task Manager makes it easy to switch to running programs. But it also lets you launch programs quickly from its Tools menu, and to issue DOS commands directly.

cheap, it's shareware, and you shouldn't be without it.

## **ROMBERG & ROMBERG SmartWin**

SmartWin provides few reasons to recommend it over any of the other program managers in this review. Although this \$59 shareware product has a good range of program and file management commands in its menus, it doesn't offer great customization facilities.

Though it has an Apps menu to which you can add programs, SmartWin is just an enhanced version of the MS-DOS Executive. It doesn't begin to approach the functionality of Command Post. Programs not on the Apps menu must be run by changing directories using a directory

tree, or by clicking on the path as you would when using the MS-DOS Executive. SmartWin has no windowmanagement functions, so you must use the Windows Task List or employ a supplementary program such as hDC's First Apps to cascade or tile your open windows.

One feature that SmartWin shares only with Command Post is its ability to direct the program's execution path with command-line parameters (which SmartWin calls macros). You can invoke macros manually, using the Run menu option, or by adding them to the Apps menu. But the documentation is hopelessly inadequate and only power users will be able to decipher how to use them.

An unimpressive tool stuck in the Windows 2.x era, SmartWin is more expensive and less powerful than Command Post and shouldn't be seriously considered.

# [-A-][-C-][ ESWOOHIW/: 0 File ARSH APLIB EXE APORTA EXE BROWSER EXE BROWSER EXE CARLC EXE CARSELINE EXE CHECKERS EXE CHECKERS EXE CHECKERS EXE CLOCK EXE CLIPBOD EXE CLIPBOD EXE CLIPBODS EXE CLIPBODS EXE COUNTROL EXE COUNTROL EXE CP\_BLIM EXE CP\_BLIM EXE CP\_BLIM EXE

SmartWin's **Executive can start** programs from its file list or from userdefined quick-start menus.

# HDC COMPUTER CORP. Windows Express

The middle ground between the icon-driven Aporia and batch-driven Command Post belongs to hDC's Windows Express (\$99.95). This program is a slick and powerful manager that merges Microsoft Windows 3.0's capabilities with the familiar simplicity of a DOS menu program by using a metaphor of files and folders.

Like Aporia, Windows Express bases its organization on Program Manager's program groups, which appear as folders where program information and an image

of the program's icon is placed. Unlike Aporia, however, the icons are for appearances only. You can start any program by pressing a single key or by clicking on its entry with the mouse. You can assign your most-used programs to so-called Quick keys (F1 through F9) that remain displayed in handy windows for easy reference.

### **FILES AND FOLDERS**

You use the Express Editor to merge the Program Manager groups into Windows Express. Icons must be copied to Express's proprietary format (they can also be pasted in .ICO or .ICN files). They can be edited, changed, or replaced with the program's built-in icon editor.

Adding new programs manually to the menus is a time-consuming process. You must first fill out a program information form (similar to but not as complex as a .PIF dialog box) for each program, and since the Express Editor does not have a browse facility like the Program Manager, you must know the full path and program name to complete the process. However, you can create entries simply by dragging the files from the Windows File Manager, which will give you a good

Windows Express is much more than a menuing program, however. Because any menu entry can be password protected, Windows Express makes an excellent front-end for LAN administrators to use with Windows workstations. However, if your needs border more on the fundamental side and you have just a few Windows applications to manage, hDC's Windows Express can simplify your own Windows system as well.

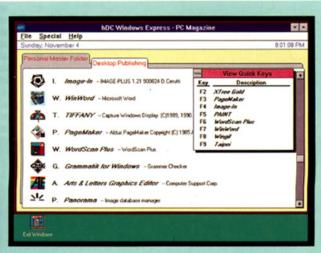


### ADDITIONAL PROGRAM MANAGEMENT UTILITIES

A number of other programs in this review have program management capabilities. A number of the file managers, for instance, can be used as program shells if you really prefer a file-based interface. But a couple of utilities deserve special mention here for the help they offer in taming your Windows desktop.

One of the most useful features of hDC's FirstApps (see the Accessories section) is its Work Sets, which allow you to run several programs simultaneously under a single name. You define Work Sets by setting up your desktop the way you want it, and then "saving" it in a work set, which retains the programs and the window arrangement. You can designate one work set to be run automatically at startup. The MicroApp Manager Menu attaches itself to the Windows Control menu, making it instantly available from any open application.

Similar in concept but far less powerful is GESYS WindowsTools, which is an array of small utilities that originated in Germany and are available on bulletin boards in this country. GESYS Windows-Tools utilities are not quite fleshed out enough to be truly useful. For instance, its directory search utility doesn't display a directory tree and it cannot be used for switching to a directory. Its Program Starter is a bare-bones menu utility to which you must add program groups and applications manually through a dialog box that lacks any directory or search functions.



Windows Express is similar to many DOS menu systems, but it uses a file-and-folder metaphor to help you find your programs quickly. You can start any program with a single mouse click, or by assigning a quick-start key.

#### EASY COME, EASY GO

For those who need a little help starting the program, there are four handy utilities to do the job well. Each is best when started from the Load= line of WIN.INI. StraightLine, a \$99 commercial product, remains on the desktop at all times; you bring it up by pressing a (user-defined) key or mouse-key combination. Its directory search functions make it easy to add programs to its Launch menu, and you can start programs that aren't on the menu using an Instant menu selection. You can also use it to switch tasks in the manner of the Windows Task List.

Launch, a free utility available on the MS-WIN forum, displays its menu when you point anywhere on the desktop and hold down the right mouse button. You drag your pointer to the desired program name and release the button to execute the program. You must add menu items manually, by editing a text file.

You can think of METZ Runner (\$10 shareware) as a handy command line that can be kept active as an icon until you need it. To start a program, you simply enter its name in the box as you would at the DOS prompt with command-line parameters included. Unfortunately, METZ Runner can't iconize itself after it starts, so you must minimize it manually. Runner, a free utility, places any number of Runner icons on the Windows desktop, representing programs that you have defined on its setup menu. You can then run these programs by clicking on the icon.

You may have an occasional need to exit to DOS quickly. There's no easier way to do it than with a free utility called WinExit. A WinExit icon can be placed on your Windows desktop or within Program Manager groups. In either case, doubleclicking on the icon puts you right out to the DOS prompt without a confirmation box (the utility always checks open Windows applications for unsaved documents before closing them, of course).

### StraightLine

First Genesis Software Inc., 1000 Sheland Pkwy., #270, Minneapolis, MN 55426; 800-325-6582, 612-544-4445.

List Price: \$99.

CIRCLE 550 ON READER SERVICE CARD

#### METZ Runner

METZ Software, P.O. Box 6042, Bellevue, WA 98008-0042; 800-447-1712, 206-641-4525.

List Price: \$10.

CIRCLE 551 ON READER SERVICE CARD

#### **WINDOWS 3.0 UTILITIES AT A GLANCE** Products listed in alphabetical order within each section **FILE MANAGEMENT** PROGRAM ACCES **MANAGEMENT UTILITIES** UTILITIES SORIES This table uses PC distinctive tints to PC **METZ Desktop Manager** help you match Express Windows utilities with their core Set **Becker Tools METZ Task** functions. Command SmartWin Pubtech Aporia \$50.00 \$49.95 \$30.00 \$30.00 \$59.00 \$99.95 \$79.95 \$144.95 \$129.95 \$199.95 \$59.95 \$1 List price **PROGRAM MANAGEMENT** Runs programs from program icons 0 Runs programs from menus П Cascades and tiles windows 0 П 0 0 Uses program groups or folders 0 0 Uses program sets Task list **DIRECTORY MANAGEMENT** Creates and removes directories Moves directories o 0 0 0 Directory tree Prunes and Grafts branches **FILE MANAGEMENT** Copies and moves files Deletes and renames files 0 0 Changes file attributes Tags multiple files П П 0 Searches file contents 0 0 Compresses files o Backs up files 0 0 O ٥ Encrypts and decrypts files 0 Formats floppy disks 0 ACCESSORIES Address book Calendar Daily view u O 0 0 0 0 Weekly view 0 Monthly view 0 Yearly view 0 a 0 o o To-do list 0 0 Recurring tasks 0 Alarms Clock 0 0 O 0 O 0 o Event timers Phone dialer 0 0 О Timed dial 0 0 Phone log u 0 П 0 Calculator 0 SCREEN AND MOUSE ENHANCEMENT 0 Assigns keystrokes to mouse buttons 0 0 Screen blanker 0 0 0 Password protection 0 Expands desktop 0

Editors' Choice

■—Yes

□-No

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		SCREEN ENHANCER	MACI			TEXT EDITO	ORS	ICON EDITO	ORS	NETWORK UTILITIES	
FirstAppe	WinSleuth*	WideAngle 🔁	Bridge Tool Kit	Pubtech BatchWorks	Tempo for Windows	Pubtech Text Editor	SpeedEdit	IconDraw	PBlcon	Windows Workstation	
\$99.95	\$149.00	\$129.00	\$695.0	00 \$99.95	\$99.95	\$79.95	\$295.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$695.00	I
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\*WinSleuth is an accessory specializing in system analysis.

CONTINUES