

Clean Off Your Monitor with StickyNotes

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Admit it. Post-It Notes™ are one of the great inventions of the twentieth century, along with turbochargers, heavy metal, and Spandex. But, as with every sunny day, there's a potential sunburn to go along with it. The downside of Post-It Notes is staring you in the face. (Well, it's staring me in the face, but that's because I'm typing this on my computer. You're probably sitting in the back yard, keeping a watchful eye out for your kids as they race through the sprinkler.)

I'm talking about the rainbow of yellow, pink, blue and white that adorns your monitor. There's a list of which authors have submitted the latest chapters for their respective books in The Essentials. A list of ERs for Outlook Express or Agent. A reminder to go over "estimating" with my nine-year old. A half-dozen snippets of code that I use often enough to need access to, but not often enough to actually (gasp!) memorize. My 47 digit password for the beta newsgroups. A list of CDs to pick up next time I stop by the local DiscountTunes shop. Home phone numbers for Phillippe Kahn and Heather Locklear. You get the idea.

Wouldn't it be nice to have these IN your computer instead of AROUND them? Enter StickyNotes, a concise utility brought to my attention by Rick Borup, that does just so. Available in this month's Subscriber Downloads, Sticky Notes installs in it's own directory (I put it in Program Files like everything else on the planet), and tosses an icon into your Start menu. From then on, a pair of yellow notes icon in the System tray serves as the launching pad.

Right-clicking displays a menu with a half-dozen options, including the one you'll use most often: New Sticky. A new text box will display on your screen, ready for quick entry of that note that you were going to write down on paper.

You can have multiple stickys on your screen at a time, and you have complete control over what shows up. You can hide or show a specific stickynote, or hide or show all of them. You can also choose to close them, and then open them again later. You can also import and export sticky notes if you like.

StickyNote is highly configurable, without going overboard. You can define size, font, color, border, default title, and whether or not you want a scroll bar. You can also choose whether the text in the notes are saved to the registry or a file, if notes should be auto-saved, and whether they should be "Always On Top." By right-clicking on the title bar of a sticky, you can also control characteristics of that particular note.

One last note: read the help file. Not only is every question you could ever concoct about StickyNote already answered (when was the last time THAT happened?), but Christian also discusses the philosophy behind writing StickyNote, which I found pretty neat.

Saving your Win95 desktop settings

Windows95 and NT4 have proven too stable to use on a day to day basis (I guess I just need more excitement in my life.) As a result, I've resorted to a combination of one OS I can't name on my desktop box and another that doesn't officially exist on my notebook. (Want a hint? Good grief, Charlie Brown!) Thus, I can't vouch for this next one myself – but I wish I knew about it a year ago. Kudos for WinTidy95 come from John Hadzima. It saves your desktop icon arrangement so that when Windows 95 'forgets' where your desktop icons and shortcuts are supposed to be, they can be easily restored. Also very handy when you change your screen resolutions frequently. I haven't gotten official permission to include it with the Subscriber Downloads, so I'll point you to the URL:

<http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/pctech/content/16/21/ut1621.001.html>

Again, if you've got a favorite utility that you can't live without, let me know (whil@hentzenwerke.com), and I'll mention it in a future column.