e-Tips Newsletter

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Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute, and it seems like an hour. Sit with a pretty girl for an hour, and it seems like a minute. THAT's relativity.

Albert Einstein

Please keep in mind that because of the volume of e-mail we receive and the fact that we are volunteering our time for this free newsletter, we can't routinely answer individual questions by phone or e-mail, nor can we consult on individual problems or purchasing decisions.

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When I Set up a New Computer
- Wil Wilcox -

Setting up a new computer is something I do quite often. It's usually a matter of helping others install their software. Over the years, I've developed a mental checklist of settings in MS Windows that I adjust to make a new computer easier to use. I hope you'll find it helpful if I share some of that with you now.

Let's start with **Display** adjustments. A high-resolution screen can mean that everything is crisp but tiny. If that makes you squint, just right-click on an empty spot of your Windows desktop and select "Properties." That's where many people go to pick "Desktop" and display a picture of their loved ones, but you can do much more. When the Display Properties dialogue opens, select "Settings." Here are two approaches for you.

One approach is to try a different **screen resolution**. For example, if your screen is set at 1600x1200, you might try 1024x768. That would make everything look bigger, including your icons and your Eclipse Visualizer movies. If you find it makes your display look fuzzy, then try making a smaller change.

A second approach is to use the "Advanced" button on the Display Properties dialogue and then increase the **DPI setting**. If you drop down the list of choices, you'll see that there's Normal size, Large size, and Custom setting. Among the custom settings, perhaps 140% of normal is what works best on your screen. It's worth experimenting, and there's a Visualizer that illustrates these display adjustments. It's the first movie in the section of the Visualizer Topics devoted to "Display & Command Options."

While you're at the Display Properties dialogue, click on the "**Appearances**" tab. Look for the "**Effects**" button. I usually REMOVE the check from the box next to "Hide underlined letters for keyboard navigation until I press the Alt key." Using those hotkeys is often much faster than reaching for a mouse. So I do not want to hide them.

When you go back to the "**Appearances**" tab, you can also check out what the "**Advanced**" button offers. There's a drop-down list of items that can be customized. You can control the size of your desktop icons. You can make your title bars and scroll bars bigger or smaller. You can use a larger or bolder font for your menus and Tool Tips. It all adds up to a more comfortable display.

After I make all these adjustments, I close all the Display Properties dialogues. Then I click on the "Start" button of the Windows desktop and select "**Control Panel**." There I want to adjust the **Mouse**.

Wil Wilcox (Continued from page 1)

If you drop down the list of choices for "**Pointers**," you should see "**Windows Standard (extra large)**."

Before you leave the Control Panel screens for Mouse adjustments, click on the tab for "**Pointer Options**." I like to put a check in the box next to "**Display pointer trails**." Might as well use long pointer trails while you're at it. That will help you see where the mouse is moving.

While I have the Control Panel open, I go to "**Sounds and Audio Devices**" to make a few changes there. If you click on the "**Sounds**" tab, you notice a number of "**Program events**." If I have any computer problems while on a job and I need to reboot, I don't want to hear Bill Gates' theme songs as the machine shuts down and starts up. So I scroll down the list of program events and select "**Exit Windows**." Then I drop down the "Sounds" list, where "(None)" is the first choice. When my computer shuts down, it will do so in silence. I go back to "Program Events," and pick "**Start Windows**." For its sound, I pick "Ding." That means that when Windows starts up, a short ding will be enough to let me know my speakers are working. If that's too subtle, there's always "Tada" and many other choices.
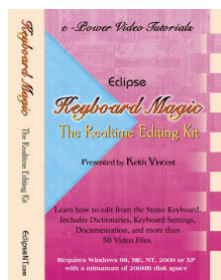
One last tip here. You might consider selecting a small picture of yourself to display next to your name and phone number at the "Welcome" screen and on the "Start" menu. To do that, open the Control Panel and select "User Accounts." You then want to "Change an account." Pick "Change my name." There should at least be room for something like "Will 818-766-7346." Then "Change my picture" would let you "Browse for more pictures" until you find a small picture of yourself. Once that's done, if there's any doubt as to who owns your computer, you can just point to your glamour shot! ■

Steno Tips

Over 12,000 one-stroke steno suggestions from your fellow reporters and captioners.
Available as a PDF word list, an Eclipse dictionary, and an RTF/CRE file.
Free at www.KVincent.com. Look for the "Steno Tips" button.

Macro: Split Current Job in Real Time

- Keith Vincent -

Keith Vincent

The Eclipse "Instant Realtime" button is the fastest way to start a realtime session. Eclipse won't ask you any questions. It won't even ask you to name the job that you are starting. It will just use your last realtime settings and start a new translation session for you with an automatic name like "RT042807-1026" to indicate the job began on April 28, 2007 at 10:26. When you finish the job, you can easily rename it.

The "Instant Realtime" button is nice, but the truth is that if you're in court, your docket may consist of a series of very short matters before a very impatient judge. You may not feel able to ask for even a minute to stop translation and then use the "Instant Realtime" button to begin a new file. With that in mind, I put together a macro a few years ago called "Split Current Job - RT." It's part of the default Eclipse keyboard setup, but I recently refined it for the reporters at the Harris County Courts in Houston and I thought it would be good to explain how this macro is used.

The "Split Current Job - RT" macro assumes that you have started realtime translation, that you have finished reporting one matter, and that you want to move that text to a separate file WITHOUT stopping translation. Let's say you've started the "Monday Docket" job at 9:00. At 9:17 you finish reporting the first matter and are ready to start the second one. Let's assume you'll write "Split Split" on your steno machine each time you finish reporting one matter and are ready to split it off and continue writing the next matter. At the end of the day, you might end up with something like this:

Monday Docket.not - Steno notes for the day

Monday Docket.dix - Job dictionary for the day

Monday Docket.wav - Sound file for the day

Monday Docket_at 9.17.ecl - Text file containing first matter, which was split off at 9:17

Monday Docket_at 9.39.ecl - Text file containing second matter, which was split off at 9:39

Monday Docket_at 10.03.ecl - Text file containing third matter, which was split off at 10:03

Monday Docket.ecl - Text file for the day.

     At the end of the day, "Monday Docket.ecl" will either be empty or will contain only the very last matter that was reported.That's because everything else will have been split out of it.

Please note: Although this day's docket was split into at least three files, all of them will be able to use the one sound file (Monday Docket.wav). So you can go into any of these files, give the "Playback" command, and you'll hear the audio for the spot where your cursor is located.

I'll make this macro available on the e-Tips page of my website, www.KVincent.com.   Here's how to make it a part of your user settings. Look for e-Tip #66 and a line that says, "To download macro…" Do NOT left-click. Left-clicking would just confuse Windows into thinking you're trying to open a MacPaint file. Instead, RIGHT-CLICK on the file name. A context menu should open. Select either "Save target as" or "Save link as" (the wording will depend on whether you're using Internet Explorer or Firefox). Save the macro on your Windows desktop so that you can easily find it later.

"Translation Magic" in Total Eclipse 4.2

- Keith Vincent -

**First, Global Magic. Now, Translation Magic and Auto-Brief.
Welcome to the next generation of CAT systems.**

With Global Magic, you only have to highlight your steno and Eclipse can usually figure out what it means. Whether it's something new for your dictionary or it's a misstroke or a "stacked" steno, Global Magic can usually figure it out, without ever offering nonsensical suggestions. It can read my steno faster than I can, especially when I've dragged in the number bar and the steno I'm trying to decipher is something like 150U78. Thus, I find that a "local" global is often the fastest way to fix an error that I would have simply typed over in the past.

With Total Eclipse 4.2, much of that same magic is now available right at the point when your steno is translating. In other words, we're not talking about fixing text after it has translated; we're talking about understanding your steno even when you're writing unfamiliar words.

Translation Magic does two things:

1. You can write long words that are not in your dictionary. Just write them phonetically. Don't have "lipofibroma" in your dictionary? No problem. Just write it phonetically and it will translate.

2. You can make more mistakes and still get the right translation. Of course, you'll still try to write perfectly, but now multi-stroke words containing misstrokes can translate reliably.

The old Phonetic Untranslates and Dragged/Dropped Analysis were limited to one-stroke words, but Translation Magic helps out even when multi-strokers are involved. So if you write three steno strokes for "thrombosis" and you drag in a K in one stroke and a W in another stroke and perhaps a Z in the third stroke, Eclipse can still understand.

The only thing that Global Magic understands that Translation Magic does not is stacked entries. There are just too many possibilities.

After more than six months of using Translation Magic, my experience is that it usually works beautifully. There are times when it does not understand my steno, but it always puts its "guesses" in untranslate color so that they are obvious and so that you can scan to them. In addition, you can adjust the weight that Translation Magic will have. So like the "Sleep Number" bed, you find your ideal number. If "50" is too much, dial it back until you find the setting that works best for you.

Hopefully, you've kept your Eclipse support and update policy up to date so that you can download Version 4.2 from the Updates section of the Eclipse website (www.Eclipsecat.com). At the moment, it's considered a release candidate. As soon as the updates to the manual and Help system are completed, it will be the general release version that is part of new installation disks.

If Translation Magic does not knock your socks off, **Auto-Brief** probably will — and the two work beautifully together. In my recent work, the term "Cyclopean" came up. NOT in my dictionary. I wrote it phonetically, it translated perfectly. They said it again. I wrote it slightly differently. It came out perfectly, AND Eclipse offered a shortcut for me. S*EU = Cyclopean. As soon as I saw that, I was able to write S*EU whenever "Cyclopean" was mentioned.

We'll speak more about Translation Magic and Auto-Brief in future e-Tips, but you can see a short demonstration by going to www.Eclipsecat.com and clicking on the graphic that says **"We innovate…"**

Keith Vincent (Continued from Page 3)

Once you've saved the file on your desktop, go to the "Edit" section of your Eclipse User Settings. Use the "Macros" button. When the list of macros opens, use the "Import" button. You'll probably need to drop down the list of choices next to "Look in." You want to select "Desktop." When you do that, you should see the "Split Current Job" macro that I've attached. Select it and then press the Enter key. When you do that, the macro is imported into your user settings. At that point you'll only need to say what steno you want to use for this macro.

Here's how to say what steno you will use for the macro. In the list of macros, press S and then look for "Split Current Job - RT". When you find it, select it and use the "Edit" button. Then use the "Dict entry" button. The steno emulator will open so that you can indicate your steno. I would not recommend a one-stroker because you don't want to do this by accident. How about a two-stroker like SPHREUT SPHREUT? When you press OK, Eclipse will be creating a dictionary entry that looks like this:

{M:Split Current Job - RT}

I'd recommend putting that entry in your main dictionary.

I hope you find this helpful. If you have any questions, you can find me in the Eclipse section of CRForum. Here's a web address to get you there:

http://community.compuserve.com/n/pfx/forum.aspx?webtag=ws-crforum&redirCnt=1

Visit Keith's website: www.KVincent.com

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