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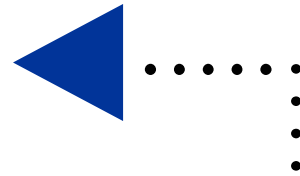
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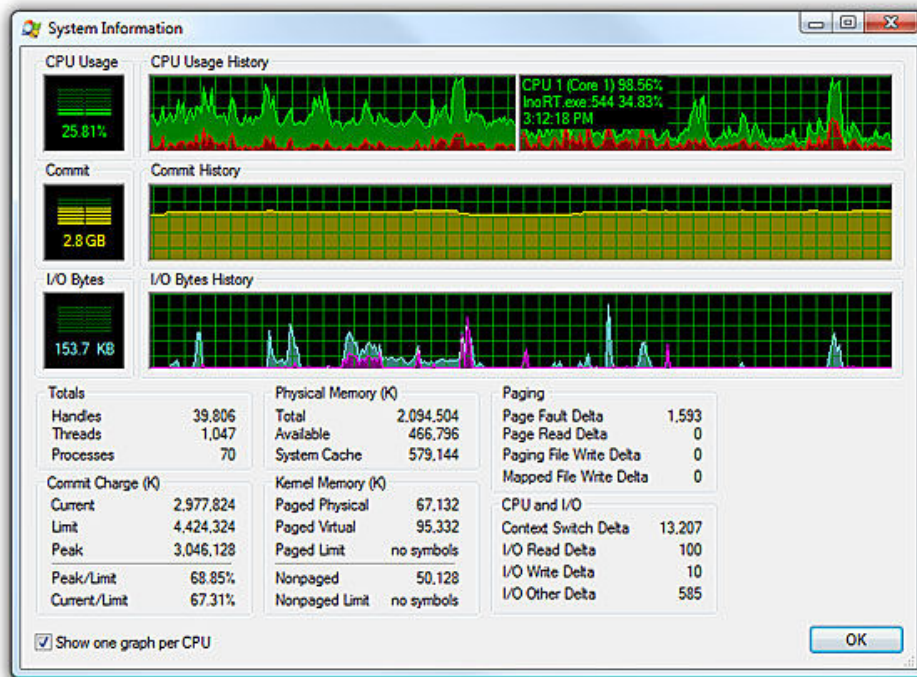


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Microsoft Acquires better Task Manager - Process Explorer

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Organize your stuff: Books, Audio CDs, Movies, & Games

Neshobee's Tech Tip - A Better Task Manager



This week Neshobee shares with us a Windows utility that's handy for diagnosing certain problems.

"Process Explorer is a freeware computer program for Microsoft Windows created by Sysinternals, which was acquired by Microsoft

Corporation."

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Process_Explorer)

Here is what wikipedia currently has to say about it:

"Process Explorer is a system monitoring and examination utility, similar to a souped-up version of Task Manager, and often can be used as the first step in debugging software or system problems when in the hands of an experienced software engineer.

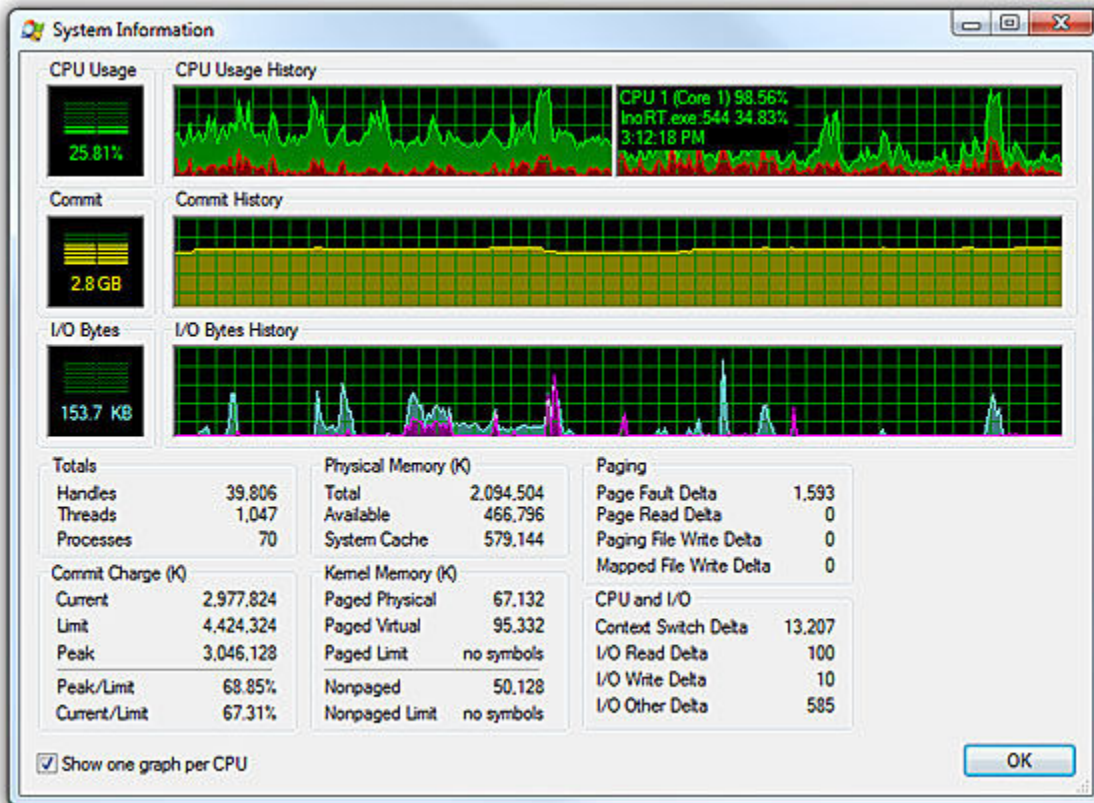
Process Explorer provides many unique features that can be used to empower the user of the product to track down problems. For example, it provides a means

to list or search for named resources that are held by a process or all processes. This can be used to track down what is holding a file open and preventing its use by another program. Or as another example, it can show the command lines used to start a program, allowing otherwise identical processes to be distinguished. Or like Task Manager, it can show a process that is maxing out the CPU, but unlike Task Manager it can show which thread (with the callstack) is using the CPU information that is not even available under a debugger.

Process Explorer works on Windows 9x/Me, Windows NT 4.0, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Server 2003, Windows Vista. It also works on 64-bit versions of Windows."

We've found Process Explorer can be a handy tool when Task Manager isn't quite enough, and it's supported by Microsoft for most versions of Windows.

NOTE: We do not recommend using utilities to make changes if you do not fully understand the consequences, and we take no responsibility for any damages caused by use of utilities featured in our newsletter.



Headlines

ICANN begins testing URLs with non-Roman characters

<http://arstechnica.com/news.ars/post/20071011-icann-begins-testing-urls-with-non-roman-characters.html>

"It's been a long time coming. A little over seven years ago, ICANN, the organization that assigns Internet domain names, committed to the idea of providing support for internationalization of those names...ICANN has now announced that the first sites using fully internationalized domain names will be accessible to Internet users starting Monday.

...Consistent with the slow progress in implementing the system, ICANN's first step towards internationalization is a rather cautious one. Only a single set of sites (example.test) will be made available, and that site will simply contain a wiki page. But example.test sites will be accessible using URLs in a total of 11 alphabets: Arabic, Persian, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Russian, Hindi, Greek, Korean, Yiddish, Japanese, and Tamil.

...This is intended to be the first step towards allowing Internet users in any country browse the web entirely in their native language without resorting to the use of English words or the Roman alphabet when typing in URLs.

...That's not to say that the move is without controversy. Unicode characters open a world of possibilities for phishers, who can use similar looking characters in different alphabets to spoof commercial domains, a concern that ICANN itself is aware of. Most phishers, however, simply rely on the contents of the spoofed pages to fool the gullible; it's not clear that this small step towards internationalization adds significantly to this threat.

P2P researchers: use a blacklist or you will be tracked... 100% of the time

<http://arstechnica.com/news.ars/post/20071010-p2p-researchers-use-a-blacklist-or-you-will-be-tracked-100-of-the-time.html>

The old cliché "You're not paranoid if they really are out to get you" turns out to apply quite nicely to the world of P2P file-sharing. A trio of intrepid researchers from the University of California-Riverside decided to see just how often a P2P user might be tracked by content owners. Their startling conclusion: "naive" users will exchange data with such "fake users" 100 percent of the time.

For years, P2P communities have suspected that affiliates of the RIAA, the MPAA, and others have been haunting P2P networks to look for those who might be swapping copyrighted files...But identifying these organizations is hard. The nature of their business is to remain

shadowy, but P2P advocates have spent years compiling "blocklists" of IP ranges that are suspected of belonging to such companies.

By parsing all of the TCP headers that they collected over the course of 90 days, the UC-Riverside researchers came to several conclusions:

...If you don't use a blacklist, you will be tracked. Every one of the researchers' test clients that did not use a blacklist soon connected to an IP address found within those lists. It turns out that 12 to 17 percent of all IP addresses on the network belonged to these blacklisted ranges.

...Trackers aren't that hard to avoid...Researchers found that "avoiding just the top 5 blacklisted IPs reduces the chance of being tracked to about 1 percent."

...One of the strategies for (trackers) remaining anonymous is to operate from BOGON IP ranges. These ranges are unallocated blocks of addresses that should ordinarily not be used on the public Internet. Of the top fifteen blacklist entities that were discovered during testing, 12 were in BOGON ranges...

...The takeaway here is simple: P2P users who don't utilize the blocklists are just about guaranteed to be tracked by "fake users" operating out of those ranges, and thus seem to open the door to possible litigation should the dice be rolled against them.

The study does have one major caveat, however; it does not attempt to determine if the blocklists actually correspond to tracking organizations like SafeNet. The researchers note that "this would be interesting and challenging future work." While using a blacklist makes it easy to avoid connecting to IP addresses found on that list, it's not clear that every range on the lists is really a tracker. Conversely, there's no way to know if addresses not on the list might in fact be tracking users.

Businesses Spend 20% of IT Budgets on Security

<http://it.slashdot.org/it/07/10/10/2233218.shtml>

"Security accounted for 20 percent of technology spending last year and it's expected to rise, according to a report released Tuesday. The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) surveyed 1,070 organizations and found that on average, they spent one-fifth of their technology budgets on security-related spending in 2006. That's up from the 15 percent of IT budgets spent on security in 2005, and the 12 percent spent in 2004." (original article:

<http://www.itnews.com.au/News/62760,businesses-spend-20-of-it-budgets-on-security-survey-shows.aspx>)

Ian's App - From the "I have too much stuff" dept.



If you are like myself, you have a huge library of books, CDs, movies, and games in desperate need of organization. Enter the ideal solution—Libra. Libra is a free (for non-commercial use) organizational database tool that lets you easily and beautifully organize your books, dvds, etc. Here is what their page has to say:

"Hook up your webcam (available from our shop! - Matt), and Libra turns it instantly into a barcode scanner. Point your webcam towards the barcode (in any orientation) on the back of your books, DVD's or CD's and Libra will auto-retrieve the product information automatically, and add it to your library. You can use a normal barcode scanner (including CueCats) too.

Based on a real SQL database engine, Libra enables you to browse, sort or search through your items in lightning speed. You can do sophisticated queries too, like "show me all the books & DVD's tagged with 'fiction' and 'kid's stuff' that are not on loan" (that's a mouthful, isn't it? :)).

Keep track of what your friends borrowed from you, and never lose a single item again. Libra helps you keep detailed record of each loan and reminds you when it's due."

Libra also allows you to print catalogs of your stuff, export your collection to a web page for display on the internet. You can even extend it's functionality to catalog items it does not currently support, or import an existing database. If you've been looking for this sort of application, your ship has come in.



Shutdown - "dot-comedy"

http://www.rinkworks.com/stupid/cs_web.shtml

- I'm a librarian/network administrator for a large community college. We have 36 workstations in our library, ostensibly for research purposes, and we use Internet filtering software, due to some students viewing pornography in the library. Part of my job is to check Internet histories for attempted accesses to sites of this kind. One recent night I was doing this and discovered that a student had typed in -- THIRTEEN TIMES -- "www i want to buy a cd dot com."

- We have a minor help site for the easiest to answer questions, and we're always telling customers to go look at that first before phoning us. Anyway, my colleague was on the phone, and I overheard this conversation:

Tech Support: "Yeah, just go to our website it's at www.[our company].com...yeah, three w's, then a dot, then [our company], then a dot then 'com'...yeah, that's right. . . . What do you mean, how do you spell 'dot'?"