



Computer “tricks”

Opinion article
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Quite often, in companies and among groups of friends, people share little timesaving ‘tricks’ and ‘shortcuts’ they know. We all want to be able to do things quicker, either because we’re bored or simply because we want to be able to do more. So these little shortcuts are always welcome.

Almost all programs include these options to operate certain functions through a combination of keystrokes. “CTRL+P” is practically a universal command to print. Show this to someone without much computer experience and no doubt they’ll think you are an expert.

There are many other such functions that would surprise many users, such as “ALT+F4” to close the current open window. Perhaps more common are the “CTRL+C”, “CTRL+X” and “CTRL+V”, to copy, cut and paste, respectively, which are applicable to practically all operating systems.

To be honest, these are not really tricks. These functions are part of the program and appear in the product guides and manuals. That’s right, take a look at the Windows 3.0 user guide (believe it or not 15 years ago operating systems came with printed manuals) and you’ll see information about keyboard shortcuts that still apply today. And it’s not just in Windows, no doubt many users would get a surprise if they pressed “CTRL+D” or “CTRL+ALT+Fn” on a Linux system.

Just as it is useful to have someone nearby that can show you, say, how to underline a word without using your mouse (CTRL-U, by the way), is also an idea to have some shortcuts on hand when it comes to cleaning malware from your computer.

In this case, your handy friend is the antivirus. Just like your helpful friends can tell you about keyboard shortcuts, these programs sniff out a dangerous email that seemed entirely inoffensive to you. But of course, in order to detect it, they need to have previously identified it. There are very few antivirus programs that can detect a dangerous file without having an identifier.

Only a select few security programs are capable of detecting unknown malicious programs simply by observing their behavior. It’s like having a friend who, even though he may not know the answer to your problem off-hand, can still work it out just by tinkering around with your computer for a few minutes.

But there are times when not even this will do. Sometimes you want to do something on your system, and there simply is no way of finding out how to do it. Not even your smart friend can work it out. In these cases, we have to go one level higher: the all-powerful IT department, and failing that, the tech support services of the program vendor.

There you will surely get the answer to your problem. They are experts who know the program inside-out, and will be able to point you in the right direction.

And what about in the case of security? Are there any solutions like that? Are there any experts that can really assure you that there is no malware on your computer? Well, yes there are, and not just

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for corporate environments but also for home users. The problem however is like that of the shortcuts on your keyboard.

The functions are there -just like the CTRL+B command to put text in bold- you just need to know how to use them. You have to be aware of them and use them; all the more important as we are talking about security and not just making a report look pretty. Go to www.infectedornot.com and then tell your expert colleagues all about it. Maybe the roles will change for once.

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