GeekSpeak | Jost Zetzsche

jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com

Windows Only . . . Windows Only . . . Windows Only . . .

Here are a couple of quickies that will make Windows just a little less mouse-heavy.

All of you probably know that you can use **Alt+Tab** to cycle between applications that are open—just hold down the **Alt** key and then hit **Tab** to view the different applications. If you are not using Windows Vista, I would recommend downloading the little **Alt-Tab Replacement** from Microsoft (http://tinyurl.com/2meyw) that gives you an image of the application you are switching to. This is helpful if you have several browser instances open and want to actually peek at the open pages. If you have Vista and a strong enough video card, you will probably use **WinKey+Tab** to cycle through the different applications in 3-D view (on most keyboards, the **WinKey** is the key to the left of the spacebar with the **Windows** icon). Again, just hold down the **WinKey** as you click the **Tab** key to browse. What many of you may not know is that the same keyboard shortcut is also available in earlier versions of Windows, but here it will simply go through the different applications on the task bar. This would be helpful, for example, if you are giving a presentation and you do not want everyone in the audience to look at all your applications in detail.

In Vista there is also a helpful shortcut to open applications directly from the **Quick Access** bar (the toolbar to the right of the **Windows Start** button). To access the icons listed in your toolbar, press **WinKey** plus the number representing the order in which the applications are displayed. For example, if Windows Explorer is the first icon displayed, **WinKey+1** will open Windows Explorer. (This can also be opened with **WinKey+E**—see below.) **WinKey+2** will open MS Word if that is the next icon displayed, and so on, all depending on the order of your shortcuts. Unfortunately, with earlier versions of Windows there is no easy way to access the **Quick Access** bar with the keyboard unless you find the successive combination of **WinKey**, **Esc**, **Tab** easier than using your mouse.

While we are talking about the **WinKey**, it is good to know that this is a key that can be quite useful in other ways as well. Most people are aware that it can be used to open the **Windows Start** menu, but few are aware that the **WinKey** can also be used in combination with other keys to perform a number of actions. My favorite combinations are:

WinKey+E: Display **Windows Explorer**
WinKey+D: Minimize or restore all windows
WinKey+R: Display **Run** dialog box

The **Run** dialog can be used for a number of things, including a quick way to enter a URL (Web address) without opening a browser first. Once the URL is finished, hit **Enter** and your favorite Web browser will open.

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