

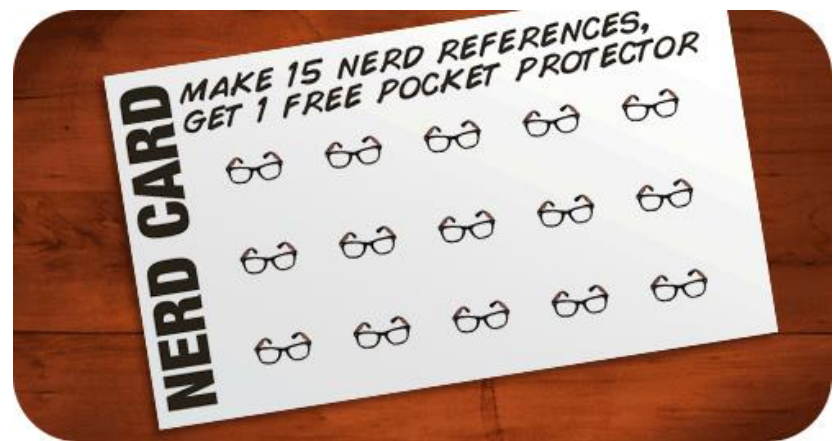
# NTUSER.DAT

# Modifications

Stephen Lien  
Technology Director  
Redwood Area Schools  
[slien@redwoodareaschools.com](mailto:slien@redwoodareaschools.com)

# What You're In For Today

- What is NTUSER.DAT on a WinPC
- What modifying it does
- Useful ways to change it
- Other useful Windows files to hack



# The Windows Registry

- Database of low-level Windows settings
- HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE: computer settings
- HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER: logged-in-user settings
- HKCU saved to %userprofile%\NTUSER.DAT

The image shows a Windows search interface on the left and the Registry Editor on the right. A blue arrow points from the search results to the Registry Editor. A yellow arrow labeled 'keys' points to the left tree view of the Registry Editor, and another yellow arrow labeled 'values' points to the right pane showing registry values.

Registry Editor Path: Computer\HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Control Panel\Accessibility\MouseKeys

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
Flags	REG_SZ	62
MaximumSpeed	REG_SZ	80
TimeToMaximumSpeed	REG_SZ	3000

# The Default User NTUSER.DAT

- C:\Users\Default\NTUSER.DAT (hidden)
- Copied to %userprofile% at first machine login
- Open & Edit in RegEdit by:
  - Click “HKEY\_USERS”
  - “File” → “Load Hive”
  - Select C:\Users\Default\NTUSER.DAT
  - Name it (I use “DefaultUser”)
- Initial settings for all users on that computer
- Unload hive when finished

# Before We Continue...

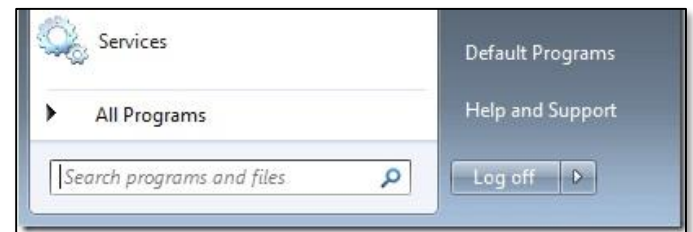
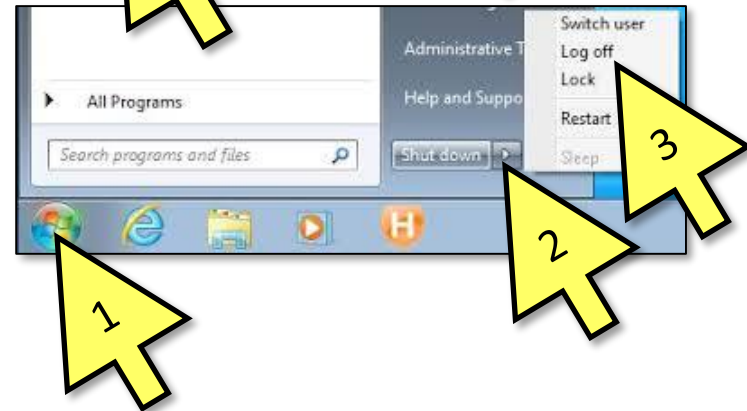
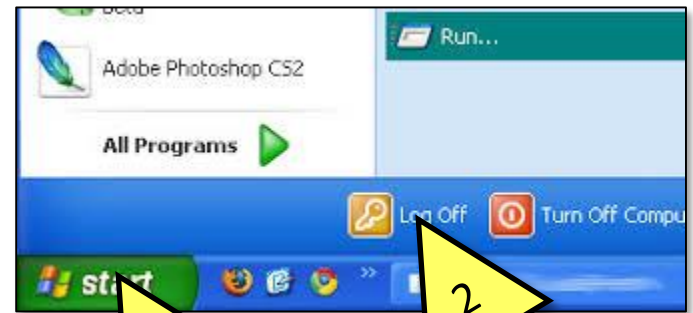
- Modifying the registry is not without its risks
- Proceed w/ Caution

A black and white photograph of a vintage typewriter, likely a Remington model, with a large, bold, white text overlay at the bottom that reads "DANGER!". The typewriter is the central focus, with its keyboard and carriage visible. The background is a blurred, rocky or mountainous landscape. The overall tone is cautionary and dramatic.

**DANGER!**

# That Being Said...

- Logging off in the Good Ol' Days...
- Then when Windows 7 came along...
- So, to fix the “problem” ...
  - Load default user’s NTUSER.DAT
  - Navigate to...  
HKEY\_USERS\DefaultUser\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced
  - Add “Start\_PowerButtonAction”  
DWord value = 1
  - Unload Hive, Reboot, Login, and...



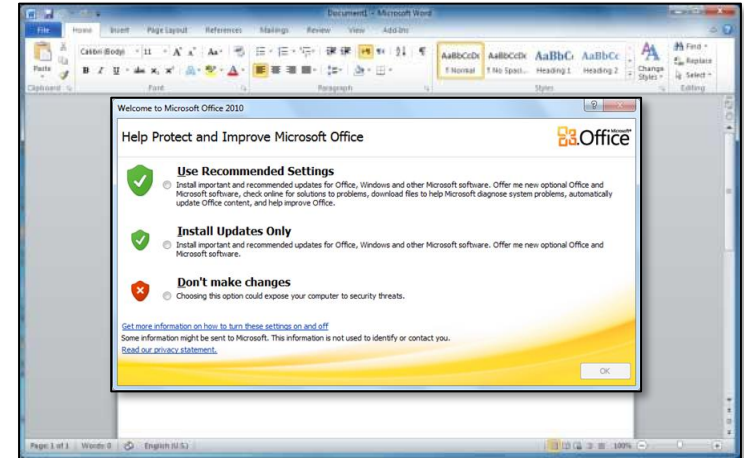
**SUCCESS!**

# Another Example...

- What Office Should Do:
- What Office Does First:
- So, to fix the “problem” ...

- Load NTUSER.DAT in RegEdit
- Navigate to...  
HKEY\_USERS\DefaultUser\Software\Microsoft\Office\14.0\Common\General
- Add...  
"FirstRun"=dword:00000000  
"FirstRunTime"=dword:15c8697  
"ShownFirstRunOptin"=dword:00000001
- Unload Hive, Reboot, Login, and...

[HKEY\_USERS\DefaultUser\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Office\16.0\PowerPoint\Options]  
"DisableBootToOfficeStart"=dword:00000001 → Kills the Office 2016 “Start Menu”



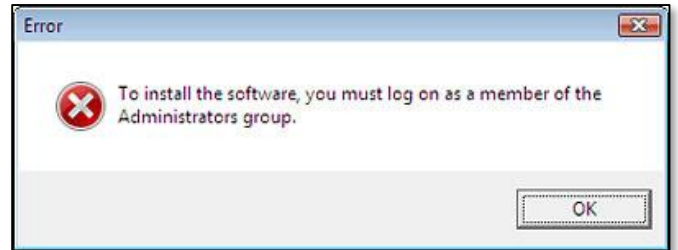
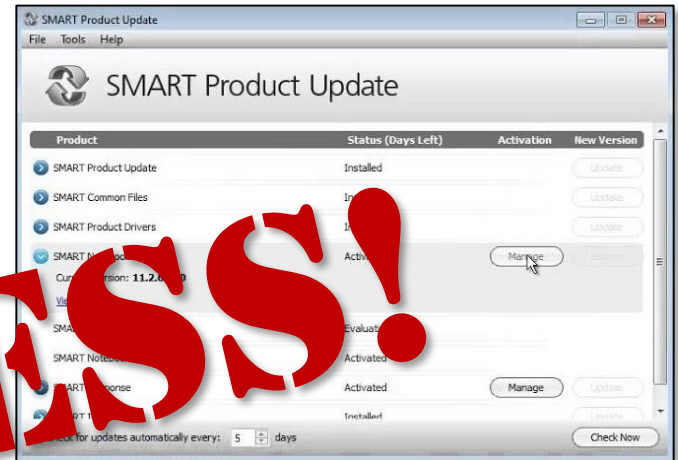
**SUCCESS!**

# And Speaking of Annoying...

- When teachers see this...
- They “update” & see this...
- They call, and I do this...
- So, to fix the “problem”...

- Load N...ER. AT
- Navigate to...  
HKEY\_USERS\DefaultUser\Software\SMART Technologies\Product Update
- Add...  
"LastChecked"=dword:52002cd1  
"Interval"=dword:0000001e  
"CheckUpdates"=dword:00000000
- Wash, rinse, repeat...

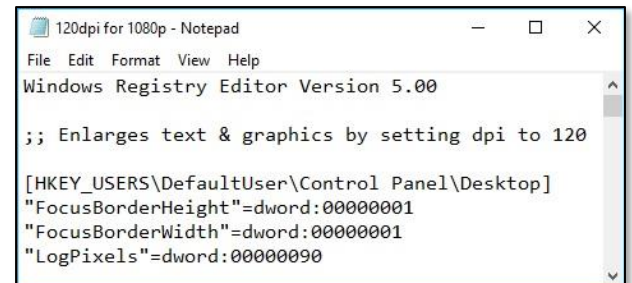
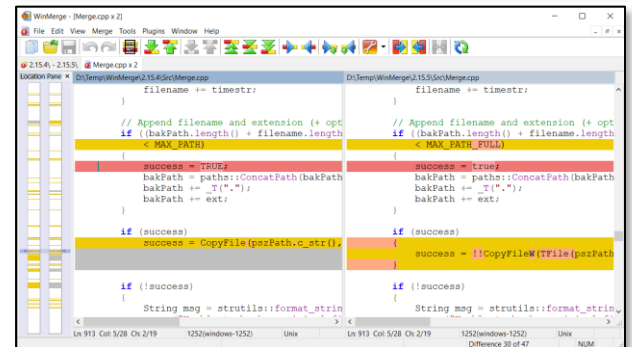
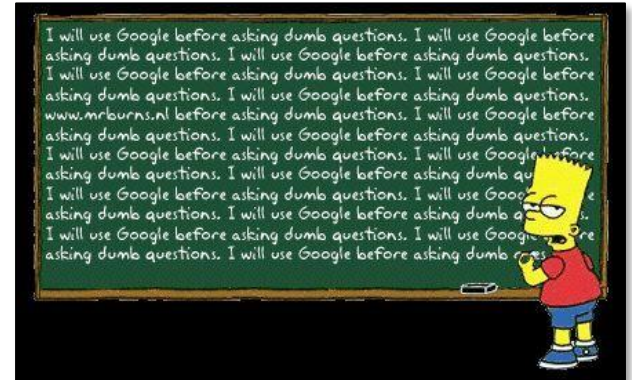
**SUCCESS!**





# Where Can I Find These Keys?

- Google it
  - “Set 120dpi default Win10 regedit”
- Preferred tool: WinMerge
  - Open RegEdit
  - Export...
  - HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft (maybe HKCU\Control Panel)
  - Make one single OS change
  - Re-Export same registry key
  - Use WinMerge to find changes
  - Save keys to formatted .REG file



# Show & Tell Example

- 1080p + 96dpi = hard to read
- Can we make 120dpi default for all users?
- Where is the “120dpi” registry key in Win10?
- Find the key, export it, modify it, load it into NTUSER.DAT...

# When NTUser.DAT is Not Enough

- Win7 gave me this...
- It reminded me of this...
- Can we make a default one?
- WinMerge found this:  
`HKEY_USERS\DefaultUser\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Taskband`
- But saving it to the default NTUser.DAT did...



**NOTHING!**

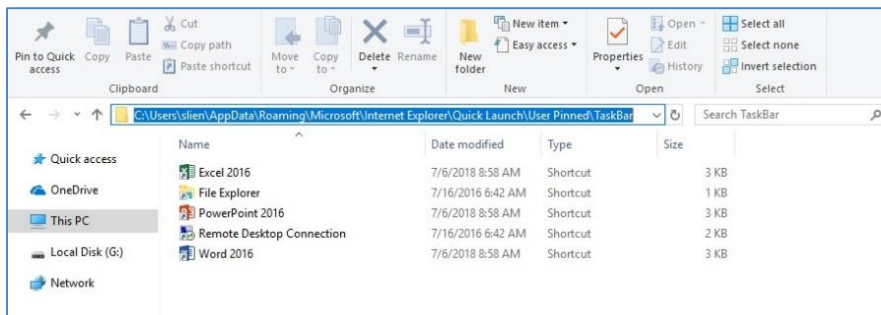
# So I Did Some Digging...

- And I found this!

%userprofile%\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Quick Launch\User Pinned\TaskBar

- So, the recipe:

- Manually create the desired “default dock”
- Copy %userprofile%\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Quick Launch\User Pinned\TaskBar to C:\users\default\AppData...
- Export HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Taskband keys
- Import exported keys into default NTUSER.DAT
- And...

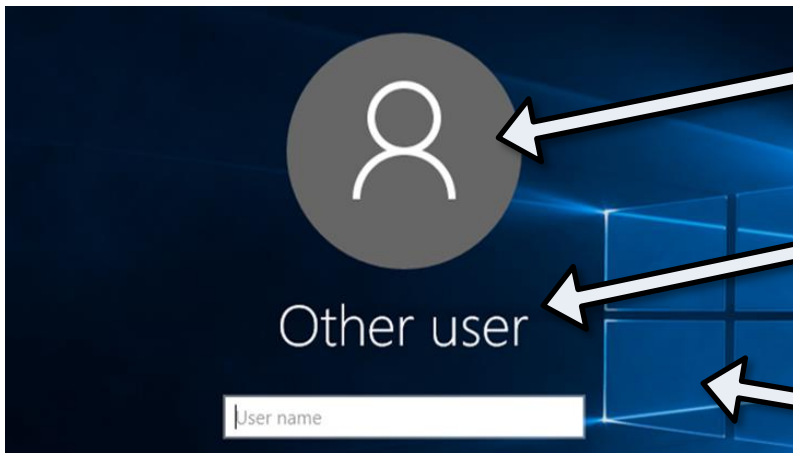


# Hello Windows 10...

- Hello “Other User”
- Can we change “Other User”?
  - And the icon? & background?
- Yes! But not in the registry.

Hi

```
[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\  
Software\Microsoft\Windows\  
CurrentVersion\Policies\System]  
"EnableFirstLogonAnimation"=  
dword:00000000
```



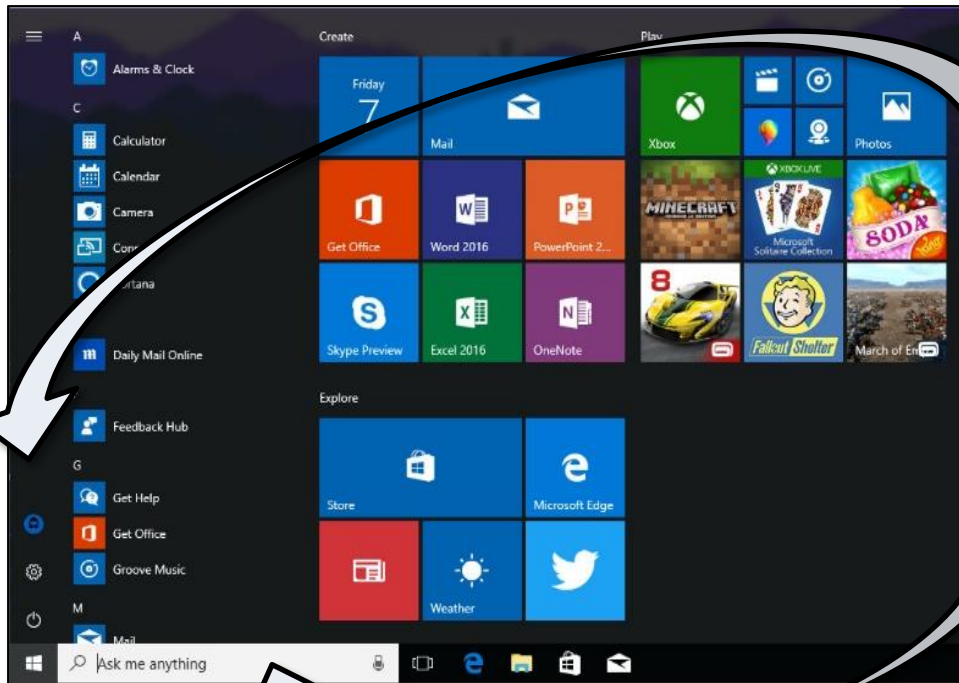
Need to replace user\*.png & guest.png in  
C:\programdata\Microsoft\user account pictures\

Need to edit (w/ DLL editor)  
C:\windows\system32\en-US\credprovhost.dll.mui

Need to edit three HKLM registry keys AND replace  
C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\OOBE\Info\Backgrounds\  
backgroundDefault.jpg file

# Can There Be a Perfect Start Menu?

- Make it “Perfect”, then...
  - Win PS: Export-StartLayout –path <path><file name>.xml
  - Move to C:\users\DefaultStartMenu.xml
  - LayoutCustomizationRestrictionType="OnlySpecifiedGroups"



Export [HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\  
Software\Microsoft\Windows\Current  
Version\CloudStore\Store\Cache\  
DefaultAccount\ keys; import into  
NTUSER.DAT

[HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\  
Policies\Microsoft\Windows\  
Windows Search]  
"AllowCortana"=dword:00000000

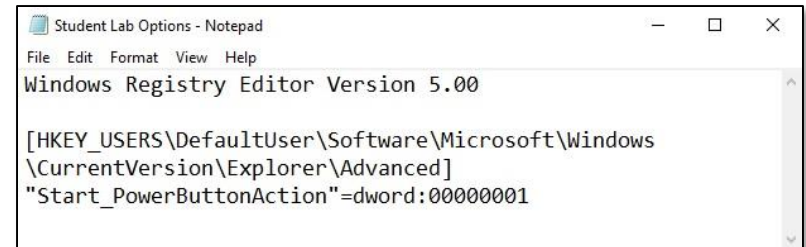
# And Don't Get Me Started on PDF Readers

- Because Microsoft Edge works 100%
- And it's easy for all users to change
- But, if *want* to change the default to Adobe...
  - Modify 11 registry keys in NTUSER.DAT...
  - Export modified OEMDefaultAssociations.xml...
  - Copy it to C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32...
  - And you're good to go!



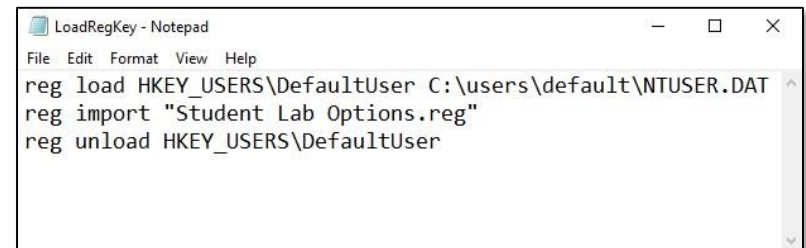
# My “Recipe Book”

- Save Keys & Values to .REG files
- Load NTUSER.DAT hive, then Dbl-Clk .REG files
- Or run a batch script...
- Lots of batch scripts for non-.REG hacks
- Download Presentation Files for more



```
Student Lab Options - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00

[HKEY_USERS\DefaultUser\Software\Microsoft\Windows
\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced]
"Start_PowerButtonAction"=dword:00000001
```



```
LoadRegKey - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
reg load HKEY_USERS\DefaultUser C:\users\default\NTUSER.DAT
reg import "Student Lab Options.reg"
reg unload HKEY_USERS\DefaultUser
```

