



# Mrs. Wizard's CompuQuickTips For the Rest of Us

## OpenOffice.org ...

### Tips, Tricks & How To's

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*Cruising the Caribbean is an experience I would recommend highly, but HOME is always best and getting back into my Cyber Saddle is wonderful!*

*Over the next few issues learn the nuts and bolts of OpenOffice.org. The more you use it, the more you will appreciate its power! Did I mention it is FREE???*

If you have been struggling with the idea of spending several hundred dollars for Microsoft Office, it may certainly be time to consider the **FREE** alternative. *OpenOffice.org* is a large download (about 50 Mb) but as an office suite of down to earth, ready to use essentials, it is a great alternative to the big guys! You can open the latest versions of Word, Excel, even PowerPoint files with no problems. And the best part is you can create your own similar files and save them in these popular formats so your friends can open them too.

After installing *OpenOffice.org*, you will notice a few cosmetic differences, but under the hood, it is a very powerful suite of programs. Here are a few tips and tricks to help you become more comfortable with it.

Once installed, you will find *OpenOffice.org* in your *Program Files* area (Start/All Programs or Programs) just like any other software. If you hold your mouse pointer over *OpenOffice.org* (the main program group) you will see several choices. *Text Document* is the main word processing module of this software and you will see a lot of similarities to MS Word. *Spreadsheet* is comparable to Excel and *Presentation* is *OpenOffice.org's* answer to PowerPoint. *HTML Document* will cause it to open as a very powerful web editor (not word processor). If you click *From Template*, you may not see very many to choose from, but there are plenty to download from the *OpenOffice.org* website. You can also use existing documents as templates (or cheat sheets) to get you going. Just change the information to what you want, click the word *File*, then *Save As* and give your new file a different name. You can save it in the latest MS Word format, or *OpenOffice.org* format, which will give it a *.sxw* file extension (instead of *.doc*). Remember, any time you need to send a file to a friend who isn't lucky enough to have *OpenOffice.org*, you can always do a *Save As* and save it in the format they *do* have.

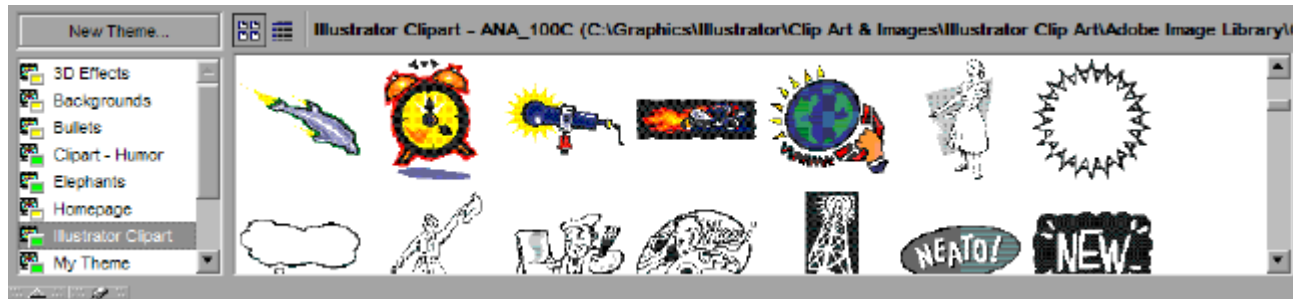
**Text Document ...** Very intuitive and easy to use. You will find all the familiar formatting options available in the *Toolbar* at the top of the main window. Spend a little time letting your mouse pointer linger over the buttons. A popup will appear to let you know what each is for. All your font

formatting choices are in the top area. To change your font, click the little down arrow to the right of the default font name (usually Times New Roman). You will be able to choose from any font installed on your system by scrolling and clicking. To change the size of the font. Click the little down arrow to the right of the number box (to the right of the font name box) and choose a different size. The higher numbers will give you larger text.

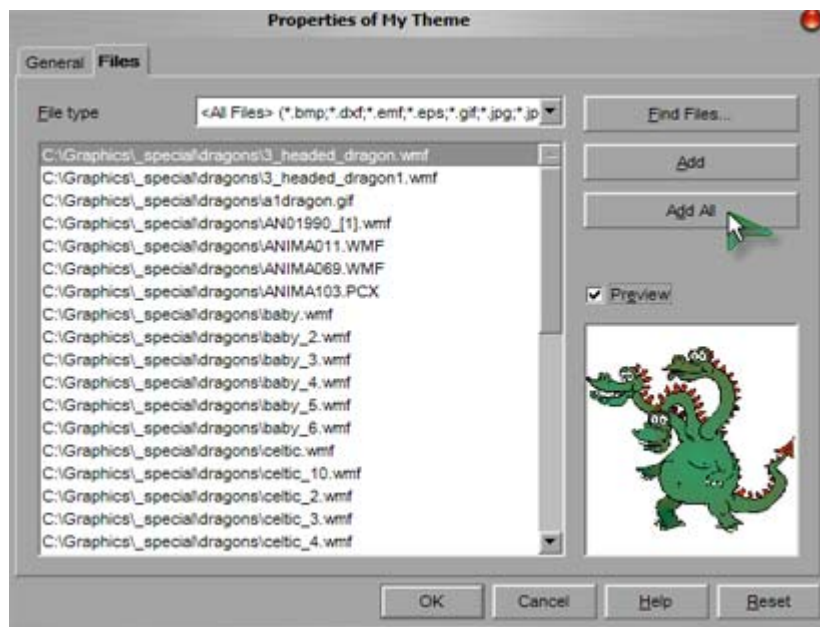
There is a handy button for changing the font color. If you would like to change something you have already typed, highlight it before making your choice. To see your results, click anywhere (single left click) in a white area on the page.



# OpenOffice.org ...



**Gallery ...** The *Gallery* button is a great tool and you have access to it in any *OpenOffice.org* document. Click the *Gallery* button to explore. Add your own clipart folders to the Gallery quite easily. Click the *New Theme* tab. In the next window that appears, click the *Files* tab. Use the *Find Files* button to find the folder where your favorite images stash is located... You DO have one, don't you? Use the *Add All* button to add all your images to the list so *OpenOffice.org* can list the thumbnails for you. It is capable of showing thumbnails for all major graphic formats. If you use the *Gallery*, you can left click and drag your images right into your document, rather than opening a separate image viewer and dragging from one program to another. This just makes it a little easier and puts a nifty tool right at your fingertips. Click the *Gallery* button on the toolbar to turn it on or off. When you don't need it, it is out of sight. The *Gallery* won't suck your precious resources either!



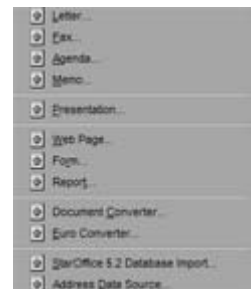
If Life could be like a computer...

You lose your car keys? Click "Find!"

**Auto Pilot ...** Looking for cheat sheet documents to get you started and make you look good at the same time? Once you have *OpenOffice.org* opened, click the word *File*, then *Auto Pilot*. Whether it is a letter, fax, agenda or memo, just fill in the blanks and let *OpenOffice.org* build your template to your personal specifications.

There is an *Auto Pilot* for letters, faxes, memos, reports, agendas, presentations (like PowerPoint), and even web pages! That's right! You can even use your *OpenOffice.org* to create web pages.

The best way to learn *OpenOffice.org* is to simply use it. It won't be long before you begin to wonder what you ever did without it!



## Utilities ... Defrag

Even with a new, hot, fast computer loaded with Windows XP, defragging (optimizing) your hard drive is still a necessity. You don't need to do it as often, thanks to NTFS (a much more efficient file system under the hood), but you still need to do it regularly if you want to keep your computer running as smoothly as possible.

Hard disks don't stay neatly organized for long. When you change existing files, the file system has to allocate more clusters for storage, usually in a different location on the hard drive. As you delete files, you create gaps in what was a nice neat arrangement of stored files. As you save new files, Windows XP uses all these bits of free space, scattering them over the hard disk into many different pieces. What you end up with is *fragmentation*. Disk performance becomes sluggish because your disk heads need to spend extra time moving all over the disk to find bits of this and the rest of that.

The *Disk Defragmenter* utility makes it all better by physically rearranging files so they are stored in contiguous clusters (in proper order). It also consolidates free space, making it less likely that new files will be fragmented when you save them.

To find *Disk Defragmenter*, click the *Start* button, then *All Programs*, *Accessories*, and *System Tools*.

**Before Defragging ...** Go ahead and empty your *Temporary Internet Files* and delete your *History* files if you need to. Open *Internet Explorer*, click *Tools*, and *Internet Options*.

Run *Disk Cleanup* to clean out other temporary files.

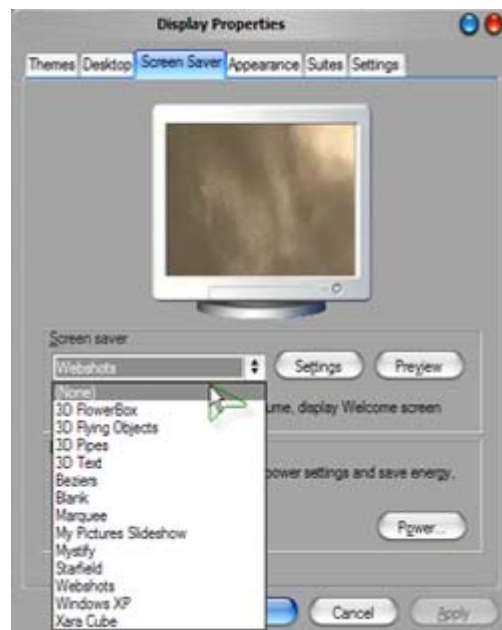
Your Defrag utility will ignore *Recycle Bin* files, so make sure you *empty* the recycle bin.

Shut down any programs that may be running. This is not a time to do email, surf the Internet, or write a letter to Aunt Fanny. Turn off your *ScreenSaver* by right clicking any empty area of the *Desktop*, choose *Properties*, click the *Screensaver* tab. Choose *None* as the current screensaver.

**Analyze it ...** before you actually begin the *defragmenting* process, *Disk Defragmenter* will analyze your computer to see if it really thinks you need to defragment. Even though the analyzer may disagree, it won't hurt to defragment your hard drive once a month. Certainly use defragmenting as one of the first things you do to cure a sluggish computer.

If Life  
could be like  
a computer ...

"Help" with the  
chores is just  
a click away!



# Recreational Computing ...

## Viva La Différence!

Recreational computing isn't just games or a total addiction to computers. *Recreational Computing* is any computer activity done because you *want* to, not because you *have to* because of a job or career opportunity. There are more recreational users than you would think. There are some who love the stimulation learning something new each day can bring. And, if you use a computer, you *will* learn something new every day! So what, if you have fun while you're at it?

**Photography ...** If you enjoy photography and have a digital camera, there is nothing more fun than taking your photos to an entirely different level. Use PowerPoint to make wonderful slide shows of your images, add a little background music, interesting transitions between each slide, strap your unsuspecting guests (with special couch seatbelts - locking of course) to your sofa, attach the laptop to your big screen television and watch their eyes glaze over with delight as they see each and every one of your vacation photos. If that isn't enough, burn your PowerPoint slide shows to a CD so they can take your vacation home with them! hehehe... it doesn't get any better than that!

Grab your favorite photo editing software and turn those icky photos into works of art. You would be surprised what can be salvaged from digital photos that might otherwise be deleted. Take bits of one photo, bits from another, and add them to another and build a collage. Your only limit is your imagination. Use your unique creations for wallpaper on your computer screen to show the world your true *personality and creativity!*

**E-Mail ...** With friends and family scattered all over the country (if not the world), there is nothing more satisfying (or instant) than e-mail. Rather than waiting for a letter to arrive (could take days or weeks), e-mail is quickly becoming a favorite communication choice. Share your experiences or daily activities with your loved ones by sending photos. It is wonderful!

**Games ...** From eight to eighty, there is something for everyone. Old Mr. Wizard enjoys playing Hearts online with other people from all over the world. All you need is an Internet connection and a little bit of skill. It is a great way to make new friends. Old Mrs. Wizard's favorite is a little shareware game from <http://gamehouse.com> called *Super BounceOut*. Now *that* will clear your head!

**Listening ...** Two of my favorite sites are <http://audible.com> (for downloadable books) and <http://live365.com> for old time radio shows. With newer (faster) computers, it is certainly possible to do more than one thing at a time. Have your favorite music, book or radio show playing in the background. You may never watch television again when you discover just how much the Internet can provide!



A crash reduces  
Your expensive  
computer  
To a simple stone.



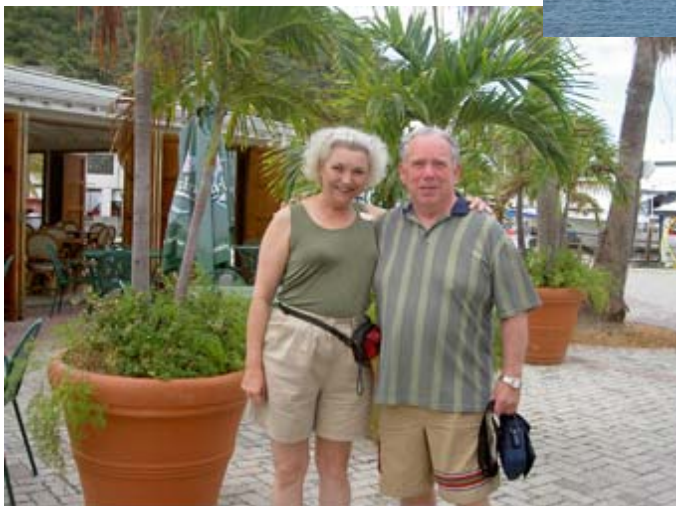
## Recreational Computing ...

Using a computer for *Fun* is what I have concentrated on this month and during my very first cruise on the *Sun Princess*. For those of you who have wondered what old Mrs. Wizard looks like, here are a few photos from the trip. Don't laugh! I'm still a geek, but one who had a great time!



Curacao and the Sun Princess!  
It was a huge ship!

The Web site  
you seek  
Cannot be located,  
but  
Countless more  
exist.



I'm even managing to get a little  
SUN!

Mr. & Mrs. Wizard in St. Maarten!

## Computing @ Sea ...

**February 22, 2004 ...** In lieu of a *single Tiny Treasure* this month, I thought I would use this space to share some of the experiences I am having at sea for a whole month! At about halfway through my little adventure, I'm not sure if I will be able to send it up to [mrswizard.com](http://mrswizard.com) on the last day of February the way I usually do, but I will certainly try! Internet access is non-existent as far as my personal computer is concerned. I am able to do a quick email check on the ship's computers, but the connection (satellite) is slow and sometimes doesn't work. File attachments are not allowed, probably for security and to prevent viruses. I am using <http://www.mail2web.com> to do the occasional email check. It seems to be more dependable than <http://www.e-mailanywhere.com> lately.

While it is pretty easy to find public computers and surf the Internet or catch the odd email, it has been impossible (so far) to hook *my* computer to the Internet so I can send files up to the server. So much for updating old [mrswizard.com](http://mrswizard.com)!

It has been difficult for me doing without my "on all the time" RoadRunner cable Internet Connection. I guess I have to admit to a total addiction now (hehehe). Let's put it this way... While I am enjoying this trip, I will appreciate more the slower pace at home. I miss spending hours working on a web and checking and answering email during the day. The sun is nice, and probably good for me, but my little doggies are nice too!

Don't think for a moment Old Mrs. Wizard is whining! This has been the opportunity of a lifetime! I never thought it would be possible to combine my love of computers and helping new users with traveling on a cruise ship. The staff has been wonderful, the food awesome and the passengers who have attended my lectures and classes have been very enthusiastic and encouraging. They know they have a lifeline of help in <http://mrswizard.com> even when we are all back to our "normal" lives. It is exciting to have been able to meet so many wonderful people.

**February 26, 2004 ...** I'm getting around the *Sun Princess* much more easily now, and haven't gotten lost in days! Taking a LOT of photos with a new Minolta 5 Mega Pixel digital camera (purchased in St. Thomas). Ideas are flying through my brain! I am planning all sorts of interesting, informative articles for future newsletters. I'm sure many of you will love some of the tips and tricks on digital cameras I have picked up along the way. I've been able to help quite a few passengers with their new cameras the last few days, and that has allowed me to note many similarities between different brands and models. When I write in general terms, you will be able to use the information no matter what kind of camera you happen to have.

Since jumping on the Internet with little Trixie (my laptop) is continuing to look next to impossible, I'm beginning to be more resigned. This is the only disappointing part of my trip, being so completely out of pocket an entire 30 days. On a positive note, when I return home, I will appreciate that 24/7 RoadRunner connection a LOT more and will have lots of files ready to update [mrswizard.com](http://mrswizard.com) and [compuquicktips.com](http://compuquicktips.com) immediately. It's a good thing I'm getting lots of sunshine now, because I will be so happy to be back in the saddle again I may not see daylight for a few days!

**February 28, 2004 ...** We will be pulling into Ft. Lauderdale in the morning. I've been hearing from other crew members of a few places there (close to the ship) where I might be able to hook my laptop to a nice fast Internet connection. If I can, I will see if I can make it there and send up the newsletter and at least update the current issue page on [mrswizard.com](http://mrswizard.com). If not, it will be 10 more days before I can get home. I know all you dear readers will understand and wish me well. And if this newsletter has a few typos, I know you will forgive that too!

**March 6, 2004 ...** I'm counting the days until I board the plane for that final trip home. By the evening of March 10th, I will be hooked up to my friendly neighborhood cable connection and will happily be sending this newsletter to [compuquicktips.com](http://compuquicktips.com) so you can catch up on all the good stuff. It has been a wonderful trip and I will never forget the terrific passengers and crew. I hope they ask old Mrs. Wizard back (but not too soon!) and I *really* hope I have connecting *my* laptop to the Internet worked out by the time it happens again. My trip would have been perfect if I had been able to connect little Trixie to the Internet when I needed to.

So ... looking forward to being home and thinking about *my dear readers* all the time!

Love to All!



## Mrs. Wizard

If Life  
could be like  
a computer ...

To "add/remove"  
someone in your life,  
click settings and  
control panel.

## QuickTips ...



**Set a restore point first...** Even if you are absolutely convince a new program won't gum up your system, it is always a good idea to manually create a System Restore checkpoint first. If you run into problems after the install, you can uninstall the program, then use System Restore to remove any leftover program files and registry entries. Your XP computer automatically creates restore points at regularly scheduled times. It will even create a new restore point before some programs are installed (but not all). Creating a restore point manually just gives you added protection.

**To create your own Restore Point ...** click the Start button, move the pointer to All Programs, then Accessories. Find System Tools and System Restore. Click System Restore. In the next window that appears, click the circle to the left of Create a Restore Point. Click Next. Type a description in the next box that appears. Click the Create button and you are finished!

Your computer automatically creates restore points at regularly scheduled times or before certain programs are installed. However, you can use System Restore to create your own restore points at times other than those scheduled by your computer.

Type a description for your restore point in the following text box. Ensure that you choose a description that is easy to identify in case you need to restore your computer later.

Restore point description:

The current date and time are automatically added to your restore point.

This restore point cannot be changed after it is created. Before continuing, ensure that you have typed the correct name.



**Start Up a Little Faster ...** If you notice your computer is taking longer to start than usual, check the *Startup* group in your *Programs* area for hitchhikers. If you have installed new software recently, chances are some may think they are so important they need to start up when Windows starts. They don't in most cases. About the only one I would approve would be something to do with an anti virus program (now THAT is important!). And most anti virus programs don't put themselves in your *Startup* group. Any shortcut in the *Startup* area can be safely deleted. If you are unsure, right click and *MOVE* the shortcut to your desktop and restart the computer a few times to see if you can live without it.

To get to the *Startup* group... click the *Start* button, then move the mouse pointer up to *All Programs* and *Startup*. Remember to check it periodically for hitchhikers and strays.

**Solitaire is GOOD! ...** If you know a brand new computer user and want to help, introduce them to *Solitaire*. You can find it in the *Games* group after you click the *Start* button and move the mouse to the *Programs* area. It is a great way to help someone be more comfortable using a mouse. Just about everything mouse related is covered in a very fun, non threatening way. They can hone their left clicking, left clicking and dragging and double clicking skills. *AND* they will have fun with an old classic at the same time!



**Other games are GREAT too! ...** Be sure to check the other games available with your Windows XP. Beginning with Windows ME, a pinball game was added. Make sure your speakers are hooked up and turned on when you play this one. The sound effects are amazing! Freecell, Hearts, Minesweeper and Spider Solitaire are also available, as well as a few Internet games where you can match your wits against other humans all over the world.

If Life  
could be like  
a computer ...

If life gets  
too noisy,  
turn off  
the speakers.

## Editor's Desk

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This *FREE* newsletter is dedicated to taking the mystery out of computers in an entertaining, informative way. If you have any questions or comments, please, drop me a line, give me a call or email me and let me know what you think and would like to see addressed in future issues. I really enjoy hearing from you and am happy to help. You can receive e-mail notification when this electronic version of CompuQuickTips is ready each month by visiting Mrs. Wizard's Web listed below. You will be able to receive it as a *pdf* file in your browser or save it on your desktop. Download the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader for *FREE* at <http://www.adobe.com>.

Help support CompuQuickTips by ordering Mrs. Wizard's CD Essentials when you visit <http://mrswizard.com>. Look in the *Special Offer* section for more information and other ways to help. Due to popular demand, the latest version of the CD has ALL the past newsletter issues (since 1995). Acrobat Reader (the latest version) is on the CD for you to install with one click of your mouse, as well as lots of Mrs. Wizard's favorite graphic shareware programs. This is a terrific learning tool! Just pop in the CD and have fun!

If you want ALL the daily quick tips in one place, as well as lots and lots of custom wallpapers for your desktop, think about joining the Happy Dragon Club at the [mrswizard.com](http://mrswizard.com) website. A very small (one time) donation will get you access to a growing number of Members Only goodies.

Sincerely,

# Cindy O'Neal



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<http://compuquicktips.com>

In April ...

OpenOffice.org - Drawing  
 Digital Primer

**mrswizard.com**

Your Personal Computer Tutor



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