



# Mrs. Wizard's CompuQuickTips

*For the Rest of Us*

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## Windows Media Player and your CD Burner ...

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*This is definitely  
the TOOLBOX issue!  
Tiny Treasures  
and Gems Galore!*

*If you have a CD burner  
you are going to LOVE  
this issue of CompuQuickTips!  
Learn to convert, store and  
organize your own collections  
with Mrs. Wizard's favorite  
audio tools.*

*Backing up is easy when you  
have the proper helpers.*

*Getting sick of babying your  
EMail program?  
It CAN be REPLACED!*

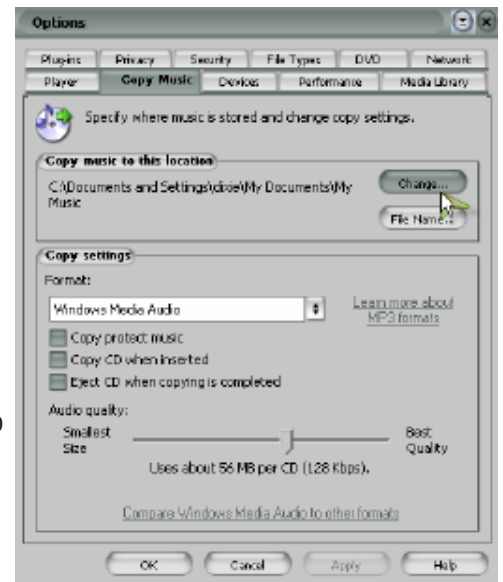
What a combination! Windows Media Player is a pretty terrific tool when you want to take your music collection (you know.. All those nifty little MP3 files you downloaded with WinMx from <http://winmx.com>?) and create your own personalized music CDs. Or you might have a great collection of CDs and you would like to mix up the songs a bit and make a few custom CDs for your personal enjoyment.

Combine it with a recordable CD and you have all you need. Here's how you do it! Make sure you have the latest version of the Windows Media Player. It is up to version 9 now and you need it to be able to comfortably use all the bells and whistles.

**Ripping songs from a CD ...** pretty much describes what you are going to do. You are taking specific songs (or tracks) from a CD, converting them to a nice compressed format, then transferring them to your computer's hard drive. Using Windows Media Player is a pretty easy process. You will end up with *.wma* files. These are much smaller than the original audio files. I like to convert them to *.mp3* files so they can be played on my portable player or stored on a CD to play on other computers. You can store hundreds of mp3 files on a single recordable CD. Think of all the CD albums you can consolidate! And the sound quality is great! There are even CD players out now that will play mp3 files, so when you need to replace your old dinosaur CD player on your home audio system, look for that capability. One CD full of mp3 files will play for days! No need to have a multi disc loader.

**The first thing** to do is establish a folder for your media files. The *My Documents* folder comes with a nice tidy little folder named *My Music*. Unless you want to create a new directory, your music files should go here. If you don't have a *My Music* folder, it is easy to create. Open the *My Documents* folder. Right click in any empty area and choose *New*. Then click the word *Folder*. Give your new folder a name and you will be all set.

**Set up your Media Player ...** Open Windows Media Player. Make sure you have it in *Full Mode*. If you are using *skins*, right click the player and choose *Switch to Full Mode*. Click the word *Tools* at the top of the main screen. Click the *Copy Music* tab and make sure the *My Music* folder is set so you won't need to worry about where your music files are going when the going gets tough. Click the *Change* button and navigate to the proper folder if you need to. Click *OK* and get ready to **RUMBLE!**



*Continued on page 2*

## Windows Media Player and Your CD Burner ...

Continued from page 1

**Ready to put in your music CD? Now is a good time.**

In the main Media Player window, click the *Copy from CD* button to the left. You should see the list of songs (tracks) on the cd. Check the ones you want, then click the red *Copy Music* button at the top. Your CD will begin to whir and you will see the status of each song as it is converted to a much smaller *.wma* file. When it is finished



doing its magic, close the Windows Media Player window. Open your *My Music* folder and you should see a nice new list of music files. If you ripped from a CD, it will have its own folder. Repeat the process for each CD you want to convert to media files.

**Burn your own CD ...** When you have all your little *.wma* files lined up. It's time to start thinking about creating your own CDs. Instead of the same artist on each CD, mix things up a bit. Put your favorites from different artists all on one CD. You can't get that in a music store!

**Insert a Blank CD ...** and open your Media Player. This time click the *Copy to CD or Device* button. If you are using XP, a window should appear the moment you insert the CD. One of the choices should be *Select Media to Copy to CD*. What a time saver! Click OK and the Media Player will open. Open your music folder in a separate window and just drag the music files you want to the left pane in the Media Player. Drag from as many different folders as you like. You can easily see at the bottom how much free space is on the CD. When the numbers on the left get close, it's time to hit the *Copy* button. Sit back and wait a bit. Your CD will eject automatically when finished. You just *Burned* your very own CD! It should play in most CD players. Have FUN!



## You Gotta Have Tools ...



Sometimes *basic* isn't enough. While *.wma* files are great, they do have a few limitations. If you want to make audio CD's, that's fine, but you will be limited to as many minutes of playing time that will fit on an average CD-R. Windows Media (*.wma*) files are small, and the quality is great, but if you want to store a LOT of them on a recordable CD, you might only be able to play them on a regular PC.



Quick convert back and forth. If you can right click, you can convert a sound file.



A Sound Studio on your computer!



When you want the very best for your Music CDs. Easy to learn, easy to burn!

*MP3* files are much more portable. There are many inexpensive portable CD players that will recognize and play *MP3* files. Very *few* (and it's going to cost you) will play *.wma* files. Windows Media Player will *not* convert its *.wma* files to *.mp3* for you. It will accept *.mp3* files to play and will let you burn them to a CD, but there is no conversion tool built in.

**NO PROBLEM!** *MP3 To Wave Converter Plus* is just what the doctor ordered! Visit <http://acoustica.com> to see all the goodies they have to offer. Install it, and with the flick of a right mouse button, you can convert those files to your heart's content. It really is that easy. You can store hundreds of *.mp3* files on a CD. Heaven's! You could listen to music for days on 1 CD!

**The big project ...** Recently I was contracted to do some updating on an already established website.

<http://herschelfreemanagency.com> has lots of music clips. Herschel wanted new ones sent up and many of the older clips were to be replaced by new ones. New artists were to be added, and some were to be taken down. Sounds like fun?

Everything went fine until I got to the music clip part. Ripping a particular song from a CD was no problem. It was trying to just take about a minute to a minute and a half from each song that had me tearing my hair out. The most desirable result would be if I could also have the last bit of each clip just fade out. This way they wouldn't sound as though they were just clipped off in the middle of anything. I tried quite a few things...

I tried playing the first bit of each song, and recording it with a nifty little computer recording program I found. It didn't work. I got a recording all right, but didn't know enough about what to control to keep all the distortion out. Apparently *recording* was not my forte.

**Acoustica to the rescue ...** Heck! I had been trying to do it all the *hard* way! And you *know* how Mrs. Wizard hates doing things the hard way.

Since *MP3 To Wave Converter Plus* is such a mainstay

**MP3 To Wave Converter Plus**  
1.5 Mb download  
Shareware Free to try  
\$19.95 to purchase



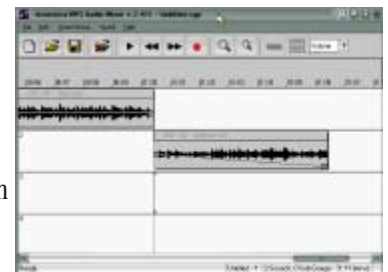
**MP3 Audio Mixer**  
1.85 Mb download  
Shareware Free to try  
\$24.95 to purchase (but last time I checked,  
a special price of \$19.95)

<http://acoustica.com>

in my toolbox of goodies, I visited the Acoustica site, hoping to get a clue or two. They had a new program listed that sounded like it was made for me. I downloaded and installed **Acoustica Mp3 Audio Mixer** and within 15 minutes I was on my way to finally getting it *right!*

*MP3 Audio Mixer* is very easy to use. I could split a song into three separate parts, exactly where I wanted. Then, when I saved the song as a *.wav* file, it would convert (from *.mp3*) and create 3 separate files. I only needed the first and second parts. The third was discarded. The original *MP3* file was left intact for future use if needed.

With *MP3 Audio Mixer* opened, I simply dragged the first part into the window, then lined up the second part right below and behind the first part. Then I set the volume to decrease on the second part down to almost nothing. The result was a perfect clip with a nice fade-out effect at the end. The *best* part was the final *save* allowed me to save it as a *RealAudio* file, which was the format required for the web I was updating. There is no other program available that has this kind of versatility and ease of use. And that is just the **BEGINNING** of the fun I expect to have with this little GEM!



Thanks Acoustica!

You have made Mrs. Wizard VERY HAPPY!

# Genie Backup Manager ...

If you are still backing up your stuff (you ARE backing up your stuff ... right?) the hard way by dragging your files and folders to wherever, you will really appreciate the brain cell savings with Genie Backup Manager.

Anyone who has been reading CompuQuickTips for any length of time knows Mrs. Wizard's "backup speech." You can replace your software, even your computer. You *cannot* replace your personal files. When they're gone, they're gone!

The best backups are *away* from your computer. Send your files to a removable hard drive or recordable CD. Floppy disks aren't very practical any more. It would take hundreds of floppy disks to hold the same amount of information you could store on one recordable CD.

Genie Backup Manager takes away the guesswork. The first time you run it, decide what you want to backup, where you want your backup to go, then turn it loose. If you are using a recordable CD and run out of space, you will be prompted to insert additional CDs until the backup is completed. Give your backup set a name and the next time you are ready to back up your stuff, just run your named backup. It really is that easy!

My personal favorite backup scenario with Genie Backup Manager is the *Mirrored Backup*. The first time you run it, all the files and folders you have selected are sent to your special backup place. After that, each backup job simply compares the files, replaces any that have changed and deletes any that are not in the originals any more. Only files that have been changed or deleted are affected. This is a great time saver for those of us who like to backup frequently. My little updates take minutes instead of an hour or more and I don't need to keep track of files I change or delete. *Genie Backup Manager* does all that for me.

Although I have never recommended attempting to back up entire systems (mainly because restoring is usually a miserable experience), I was very impressed with the options to back up things like the Registry, Windows Favorites, Internet Explorer settings, Windows Address Books, and even the Desktop and Fonts. Think about it, folks. If the *unthinkable* ever happened and you needed to replace your hard drive, you could have an easy way to restore the things that make your Windows the personal operating system it has become for you. You might have to reinstall Windows, but you would be able to get your personal settings back.

*Genie Backup Manager* certainly qualifies as a *GEM*. It is very easy to download and install. It is easy enough for a beginner to use, but major geeks will appreciate the more detailed and powerful features also available in the software.

To learn more, visit the Genie-Soft website. You can also see this review (with full sized screenshots) on the Mrs. Wizard website. If you are connected to the Internet while reading this newsletter, click the links and you will be transported right from this newsletter.



**Southern DOS:  
Y'all reckon?  
(Yep/Nope)**



**Genie Backup Manager:  
You can download a FREE 15 day trial  
\$49.95 to purchase  
5.44 Mb download**

<http://www.genie-soft.com/products/gbm/default.html>

Review on the website:

<http://mrswizard.com/geniebackup.html>

# PocoMail ...



If you are ready to graduate to a serious email program, instead of using whatever came with your computer, *PocoMail* is the one you need to try. It is just as easy to use as Outlook Express, but when you see the extra security features built right in, you will wonder what you ever did without it.

**Security ...** I don't see any government legislating *SPAM* or virus-laden emails away. They can make all the laws they want, but unless they can figure out a way to police the world, cooties and spam will continue to slip through. It is up to all of us to find ways to protect ourselves and our inboxes from garbage.

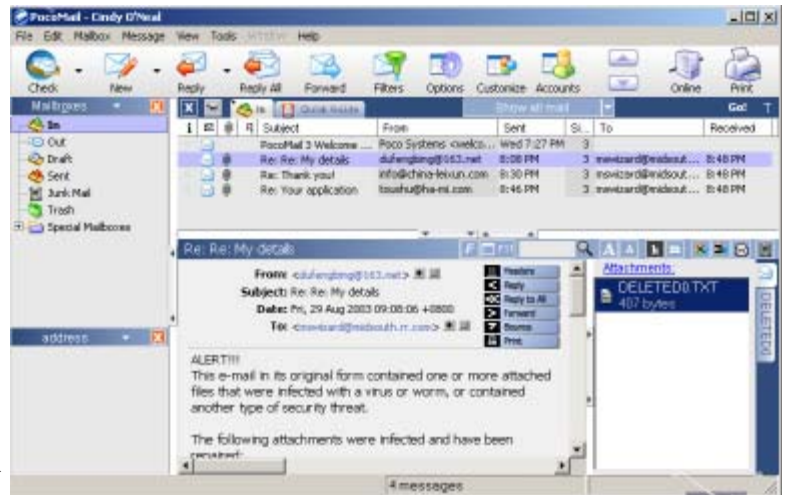
**Plain Text Viewing ...** Email cooties can slip into your computer with nothing more than a peek at an email from someone you don't know. All those images may be interesting, but they could also be loaded with cookies that will send confirmation of your email address. The safest way to preview email is in *plain text*. It may be rough looking at times, but you won't pick up any web bugs, malicious scripts or be forced to view offensive images.

PocoMail has quite a few flavors of protected email viewing. With three handy buttons so you can quickly switch from one view to another, there is no reason to be caught viewing a cootie laden email again. You have complete control.

These buttons are above the email preview and to the far right. If you let your mouse linger over each one, a small popout will appear to let you know what it is for. The *total* safety button is the one with the little envelope. It will strip all the html from any message you are viewing. All you will see is plain text. Don't worry though. If it is a multimedia extravaganza from your best buddy, just click the button again to view the message in all its glory. You are in complete control. If you receive a lot of junk email and potential viruses, the *strip html* (plain text) setting is where you want to start.

**Junk EMail ...** The little trash button (to the right of the Strip Html button) is a handy little tool. Click it to instantly add any email sender to your junk email list. There are three levels (plus a custom level) of junk email filtering. To set it up, click the word *Tools*, then *Junk Mail Filtering*. You can begin with the setting on *high*

Download and use it FREE for 45 days  
<http://pocomail.com>



As a computer,  
I find your faith  
in technology  
amusing.

*sensitivity*. Anything that looks like junk to PocoMail will be deleted from the server and a copy will be stored in a special junk folder. If an occasional friend slips in, just right click their message listing (in the Junk Mail folder) and choose *Allow Sender* in the Junk Mail Filtering menu. *PocoMail* will remember the next time. The same applies to junk that accidentally ends up in your inbox. Right click the listing, go to the Junk Mail Filtering section and *Ban the Sender*.

**View EMail on the Server ...** This is a great way to quickly scan through your email and delete the garbage before it ever reaches your email program. Click the word *File*, then *View Mail on Server*.

**Lots of Extras ...** While security is an integral part of PocoMail, you will love all the extra features. With little retractor buttons, you can instantly expand and contract your messages, mailboxes, and email lists. See the entire message when you want, the way you want to see it.

Creating email is very straightforward. All the tools you need are handy, from fonts to text and background colors and inserting your favorite graphics. Save your best work as templates to use again. There really is no limit to what you can do. Every day you use it, you will discover something new. Just take your time and *Enjoy!*

**Bottom line?** Security in PocoMail is the way it should be ... simple and *convenient*, without making you do without the fun stuff.

Download and use it FREE for 45 days  
<http://pocomail.com>  
 \$34.95 to purchase

## Tiny Treasures ... SmartClock

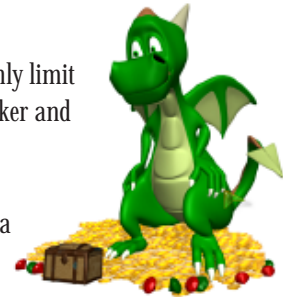
Now *this* is a clock for your computer! Weighing in at an amazing 500 Kb and *FREWARE* to boot! There are more ways to tweak this little darlin' than you can imagine. You can choose analog or digital style, change colors and even choose transparency levels. It won't get in your way either. It will disappear when you move your mouse pointer over it. If you hold the shift key down, you can move it with your mouse (left click and drag) anywhere on the desktop. How's that for discreet? You can also hold down the shift key and right click the clock to see the menu choices.

If you have friends in other countries, put several SmartClocks on your desktop. Arrange them in different places or line them up if you wish. Each can be tweaked separately for colors, transparencies, etc. Add text (or not)

to identify each. Mix analog with digital. The only limit will be your own imagination. If you are a tweaker and fiddler, this will put you in *Heaven!*

To top it all off, you can even set alarms with your own choice of wav files. On this computer, a nice *Tarzan yell* lets me know when it is time to stir the soup!

This is definitely a *WOW!* No more burned dinners at *this* cave!



[http://www.backwater.cz/chmelar/sc\\_main.php?lng=en](http://www.backwater.cz/chmelar/sc_main.php?lng=en)

Access denied--  
nah nah  
na  
nah nah!

## JV16 PowerTools



The old *RegCleaner* (freeware) program is no more. It was a great tool while it lasted, but is no longer available and hasn't been updated or supported for over a year. Fans of this neat little piece of work know how popular it has been over the last few years. All is not lost, because the newest version has been incorporated into *JV16 PowerTools*. If you are an old fan of the original *RegCleaner*, you will recognize this software author's handiwork. Its newest incarnation has been honed to perfection and works great with Windows XP.

*JV16 PowerTools* are very well suited to *experienced* computer users and tweaking addicts. This is *not* a tool for beginners. *JV16 PowerTools* will make changes to the *Registry*, and if you aren't careful ... well, the results might not be pretty.

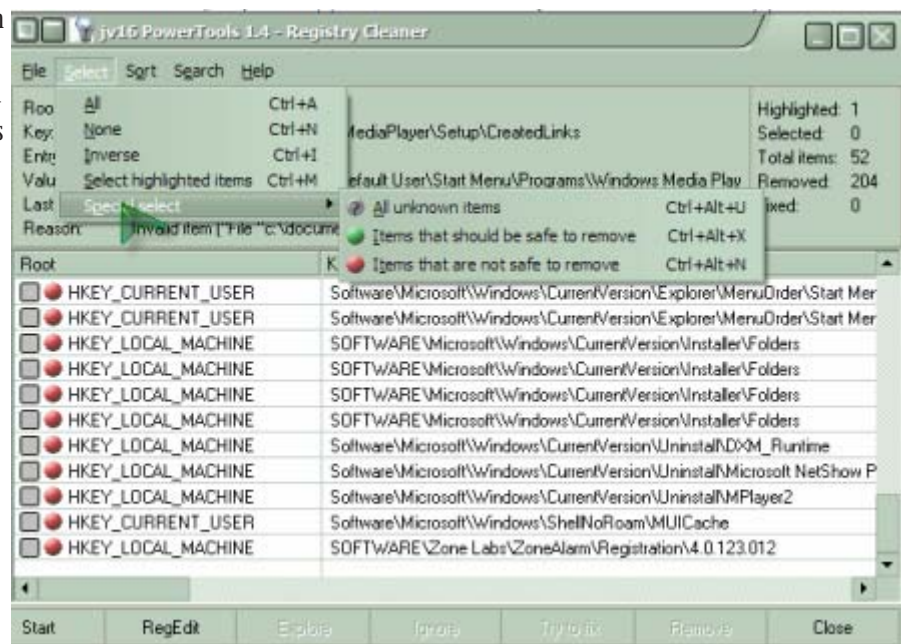
My favorite area is the *Registry Cleaner*. After letting it scan the registry for things needing to be cleaned, click the word *Select*, then *Special Select*. You should be pretty safe choosing *Items that should be safe to remove*. Automatic backups are created, so if a boo boo occurs, you should be able to restore what you need. The main thing to remember when you are cleaning out the *Registry*, is to look everything over yourself *BEFORE* you click that final button. I trusted it on my brand new laptop (Trixie) and it found all kinds of garbage, probably from initial software installations. It booted back up just fine! The *Registry* is scary. *JV16 PowerTools* is great and lets *you* decide what will go or stay. The *Registry Cleaner* is only ONE of the great tools included in the set.

FREE to try, \$29.95 to buy.  
1.4 Mb download

<http://www.macecraft.com>

Learn about ALL the features:

[http://www.macecraft.com/html/jv16pt\\_docs/index.html](http://www.macecraft.com/html/jv16pt_docs/index.html)





# Mrs. Wizard

## QuickTips ...



**Rename with F2 ...** To rename a file or folder, select (highlight) it by clicking it once. Press the *F2* key (top row) on your keyboard. You should see the name highlighted with a blinking cursor. Immediately begin typing the new name. When finished, press the *Enter* key on the keyboard to lock in your change.

**Do your Research ...** You can find just about anything you want on the Internet. It's like one *huge* shopping mall. Let your instincts be your guide before whipping out that credit card or check book though. If you have a question, there should be good contact information available on the site. Look for a phone number, a valid mailing address, and a valid email. Use them to have your questions or concerns answered. I don't care how good the offer sounds. Check the site out first! The old saying, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." could have been written for the Internet.

This doesn't mean you need to be totally paranoid. Lord knows, amazon.com knows me and my credit card information on a very personal level. I rent videos from netflix.com, purchase audio books from audible.com and have never had a problem. The convenience of hitting the Internet when you need to purchase a last minute gift for an out of town grandson and the ability to have it shipped right to his house with a nice little personal note enclosed makes my connection more than worth while. Bottom line? Don't be *paranoid*. Just be *careful*!

**Find the answers to computer problems with the Internet ...** Sounds kind of funny doesn't it? I'm telling you to use your computer to solve your computer problems. Don't laugh until you give old *google.com* a try. Grab a note pad, and the next time you have an error message or lockup, write down *exactly* what you were doing when it happened. Note the *exact* error message. Then go to <http://google.com> and while using as few words as possible, and being as specific as you can, type your problem in the search box. Hit the *Enter* key on your keyboard to begin your search. It is amazing how quickly you can zero in on an answer. It may come from a message board or a website dedicated to solving computer problems just like yours. If you don't get the results you want, try rewording your search phrase. Specific error messages are the easiest to find, but you might be surprised at what you can turn up with search phrases like "xp freezing and going to safe mode," and "win 98 intermittent lockup." Poke through as many links as you need to, until you find the answer matching your specific problem the most.

**Keep your Address Bar Handy ...** Right click any empty area of the *Taskbar* and choose *Toolbars*. When the popup menu appears, click where it says *Address*. An Address Toolbar will appear in your Taskbar. Left click on it and (while holding down your left mouse button) drag it to the top of your main screen. Whenever you want to go to a website, just type in the web address and hit the *Enter* key on your keyboard. Your browser will open automatically. No more digging around on the desktop, opening the browser first, then typing the web address. *This* address bar is always *handy*, no matter how many other windows you have opened.

**Undo a Boo Boo? ...** If you accidentally delete or move a file or shortcut to an unexpected place and can't find it, all is not lost if you move quickly enough. Wherever you are (could be the desktop or your *My Documents* folder), *right click* and see if *Undo* is available as an option. If it is, click it once and the last thing you did will be *Un Done!* Deleted files are pretty easy to recover. You can always dig through the Recycle Bin, but files that have been moved to a wrong folder can be impossible to find. Using *Undo* eliminates the need to look.

**Turn off image resizing in IE 6 ...** If you are sick of seeing the little *resize* button at the bottom right of images you open in your browser, turn it off. This way you will be able to see the image *full sized* the first time, every time. With Internet Explorer opened, click the word *Tools* at the top, then *Internet Options*. Click once on the *Advanced* tab. Scroll down to the *Multimedia* section and *uncheck* the box next to *Enables Automatic image resizing*. Click OK and you will no longer be plagued by small images when you want to see the real thing.

**Instant Shutdown ...** Instead of clicking the *Start* button and choosing *Turn off Computer* with your Windows XP, how about a quick, one click *Shortcut* instead? Right click any empty area of your desktop and choose *New*, then *Shortcut*. In the command line area, type the following *exactly*: shutdown -s -t 05

Make sure there is a space before each hyphen and after the t. Click the *Next* button, give your shortcut a name and click *Finish*. The next time you are ready to shut down your computer, just click your little shortcut. A window will appear ticking off a 5 second delay (you can change the 05 to 01 if you don't want a delay), then will shut down completely. How bout that? A *Shutdown Shortcut!* Who'd a thunk it??

←-----  
The information  
went data way  
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## Editor's Desk

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Download the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader for FREE at <http://www.adobe.com>.

You can 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 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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**Mrs. Wizard's Webs**  
<http://mrswizard.com>  
<http://compuquicktips.com>

In October ...

Snazz Up Your Email

Want More Music? Record Your Own!



Your Personal  
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