



Questions & Answers

Had enough of recurrent warning messages and superfluous dialogs? **David Moss** shows you how to get rid of these irritations and more.

Enough already

Q Is it possible to get rid of the warning message in Windows 98 that tells me I'm running low on disk space? I know I am, but I don't need constant reminders.

W Klee

A Yes, this is quite simple to do, though you have to make sure you're paying attention to the dialog boxes at the end of the procedure. These are the steps to take on the route to clear your irritation:

- 1 Head for the Start button, click on it, select the Programs menu item, then the Accessories menu item, then the System Tools menu item and finally select Disk Cleanup.
- 2 Select the drive you want to disable the warning on, click on OK and then go to its Settings tab: look for the 'If this drive runs low in disk space, automatically run Disk Cleanup' checkbox and click in it to clear it.
- 3 Click on the OK button and a dialog will appear asking you if you're sure you want to delete files. Obviously, make sure you click No at this point.

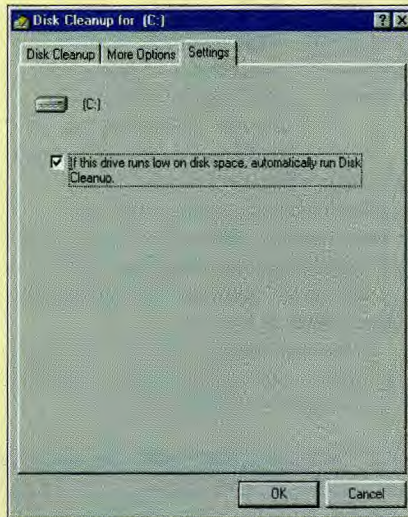
This should ensure the warning dialog goes away. For those wondering why you'd ever want to do this, Mr Klee's example is clear enough. He doesn't want to see the dialog popping up all the time, but it's something you'll want to disable if you've compressed drives, because Windows 98 will keep on telling you that the host drive is low on space.

Odd policy

Q Could you please explain why people always see a 'Loading System Policies' message when they log onto their Windows 98 systems. I haven't set system policies up as far as I know, and yet this message appears every time. Have I set the network up wrongly, or is there some other explanation for this?

R Taylor

A I wondered about that message dialog every time I saw it too. You'll be pleased to know that it's quite benign, and is in fact the default setting for Windows 9x, which will automatically go and search



A You don't regularly want to be told you're running low on hard disk space.

the network for a policy file whenever it starts up. So why don't you get a dialog saying 'Searching for System Policy' followed by one that says 'Loading System Policies if a policy is actually found'? I don't have an explanation for that, I'm afraid. You can stop it happening if it really bothers you, but to do so you'll need to install the System Policy Editor, poledit.exe. To do that, follow these steps:

- 1 Place your Windows 98 SE CD-ROM in your CD-ROM drive, because you'll need to access its contents. If it autoloads, just ignore it, close the dialog or hold down the Shift key when you place it in the CD-ROM drive to prevent it from autoloading in the first place.
- 2 Go to the Start button, click on it, then select the Settings menu option and the Control Panel menu option.
- 3 Double-click on the Add/Remove programs icon, then click on the Windows Setup tab. When it's loaded, click on the Have Disk button at the bottom of the tab page.
- 4 Click on the Browse button when the Install From Disk dialog appears, and go to your CD-ROM drive and open the Tools folder.
- 5 Next, open the Reskit folder, then the Netadmin folder and finally the Poledit folder.
- 6 Select the poledit.inf file, click OK, and then OK again.

7 In the Have Disk dialog you'll see that you now have two entries in the Components window. Select the second item in the list, the System Policy Editor, and then click on the Install button.

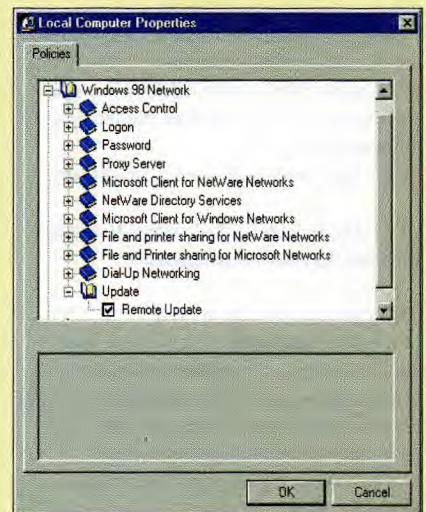
8 When it's finished, click on the OK button to close the Add/Remove Programs dialog.

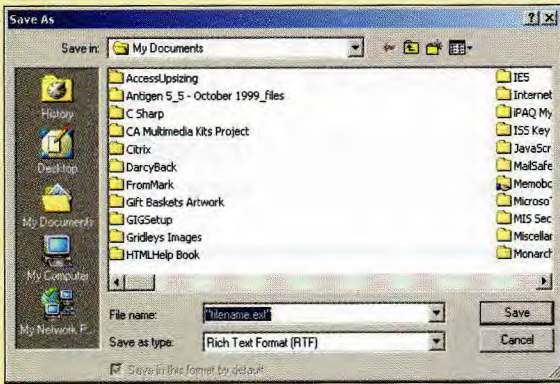
You can load the System Policy Editor in two ways: either click the Start button and navigate to Programs | Accessories | System Tools then select System Policy Editor from the list, or hit Start | Run, type poledit into the command line edit box and hit the Enter key. Once it's running, follow these steps:

- Go to the File menu, and select the Open Registry menu item.
- Double-click on the Local Computer icon, then on Windows 98 Network, and finally on Update.
- You'll see a checkbox labelled Remote Update which you should clear by clicking in it.
- Hit the OK button, select the Save menu option from the File menu and close down the System Policy Editor.

You should now find that the dialog no longer appears when your Windows 9x systems start up, unless of course there really is a System Policy that needs to be loaded.

7 Bothered by superfluous dialogs? Not for long.





A Enclose WordPad file names and extensions in quotes to have them saved with the extension you desire.

Not my type

Q How do you save a file type in WordPad that isn't supported in its File Save As list? In Notepad I used to just type the file name and extension, but I can't seem to get away with that in WordPad as it just appends whatever file format is selected in its own choice list.

M Latimer

A You need to enclose the file name and its extension in double quotes: "filename.ext". WordPad will then save the file with that extension, and won't append its own extension onto the file.

Clean-up FAQ

Q I've uninstalled a program that's left its entry in Add/Remove programs. How can I get rid of the entry?

E Nail

A It's an FAQ, but it does no harm to answer it again every so often. Removing entries that get left behind in the Add/Remove Programs list is quite simple, but it does involve a trip to the Registry, so make the usual backups before continuing with these steps:

- 1 Go to the Start button, click on it, select the Run menu item, and type regedit into the edit box, then hit OK.
- 2 You then want to find the following key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Uninstall

- 3 Scroll down the list of programs under that key in order to find the one you want, select it in the left-hand list (check the values that appear in the right-hand list box, just to make sure you have the right program) and then delete the entry.
- 4 Close down the Registry Editor when you've finished.

Non-starter

Q I can't start Windows 98 at all. An error message says that 'vmm32.vxd is required to run Windows' and then I get dumped to a black screen like in the DOS days.

I Prammle

A There are a number of things you can do at this point, and which you choose will depend on what's actually wrong with the vmm32.vxd file - this could be missing or damaged,

your System folder might have gone missing (rare, but it could have been renamed as opposed to vanishing entirely), or the PATH line in your autoexec.bat file has either been deleted or no longer points to the System folder.

To find out which problem is affecting you, fire up your system and let it dump you to the Command prompt, which is what it's

you found the file in a folder named aardvark, then for step 2 you'd type:

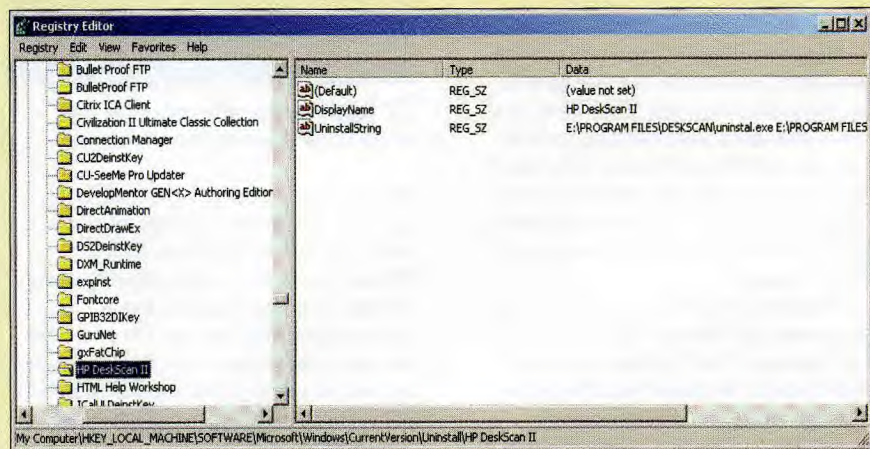
```
ren aardvark system
```

That should now work, though I'd want to make double sure that <aardvark> really was the old system folder before doing that.

To find out if PATH is the problem, open your autoexec.bat file in Notepad and look to see if a PATH line is there. If it is, but makes no reference to c:\windows\system, then add that to the line (with whatever directory and drive letter substitutions are necessary). To be honest, I can't see the latter being your problem - more likely the file is missing or damaged and you'll have to do a re-install.

Move My Documents

Q I've recently rebuilt/configured my machine. One of the enhancements was to add a second



A Removing entries from the Add/Remove Programs list is easy, but make sure you have the right one before deleting it.

currently doing (and why it reminds you of the days of DOS). At the command prompt, type the following:

```
dir vmm32.vxd /s
```

If that doesn't find the file, then it's re-install time. It's not nice but at least you'll know straight away. If it's located, make a note of where and then rename that folder to System by typing the following at the Command prompt:

```
cd windows
ren <folder> system
```

[Substitute the name of your Windows folder in step 1 if it's not called Windows. If

hard disk. Ideally, I'd like to have OS and programs on one drive and data on the other. The problem is that My Documents is installed on the same drive as Windows. I'm aware that Windows 98 uses the notion My Documents as a standard element of the OS, on the Desktop, in navigation bars and so on, and I'm assuming that just moving the My Documents directory/folder onto the D drive won't be enough to update the relevant system settings that provide that functionality. Is there any way of installing/(re-)configuring the system to use a My Documents folder from the D drive as default, instead of the C drive?

T Bartex

Readers' Tip 1

Device conflicts

In Issue 39 (February 2001) I gave some generic advice to Mr Hamam on the subject of device conflicts within System Manager and problems with disconnect timings for his modem. Mr Hamam was able to solve the problem afflicting his system by following my advice, and some readers emailed me with other solutions, which are worth displaying here. First up were Herbert Smith and Paul King, who both had the same advice on device conflicts. Here's what Herbert had to say:

'I got my answer from the Seagate FAQ page. My CD-ROM was a legacy device from 1994, was connected to the amplifier board and therefore not fully detected by plug and play. To get the device to connect, go to Control Panel | System | Device Manager and double-click the Hard Disk Controller icon; that reveals the icon for the PCI Bus Master Disk Controller; double-click that icon to give the Properties dialog, click the Properties button; in the Properties window, select the settings tab, go to Dual IDE Settings which is normally set to 'default'; change the setting to 'Both IDE Channels enabled'; then press OK all the way back, though it may be necessary to reload the original CD-ROM drivers through DOS.'

Martin Kendall wrote in with this information on what to do if Mr Hamam's devices were running in MS-DOS Compatibility Mode:

'The symptoms Mr Hamam reported are exactly those I had when

my PC was running in MS-DOS Compatibility Mode. This state is reported in Control Panel | System | Performance Tab. If this is the problem, then the hard disk(s) are probably reporting their size as 2GB maximum, and there are other side effects.

Quick and dirty fix No. 1: install or enable DOS drivers for the CD-ROM. This will only cure the CD-ROM problem, and I can't remember if it appears in the Control Panel System screen.

Quick and dirty fix No. 2: find out the location of the Initiation command that tells Windows to check for 16-bit drivers and change it. Long-term and probably correct solution: get latest drivers for all devices on the PC.'

That last piece of advice should be the starting point for everyone - always try the latest drivers for any device. It's so often the simplest cure, and it was one suggested in a further email on this topic by Eric Bowden, who also pointed out that a check for a virus would do no harm in this instance either.

The solution can sometimes however lie within the Registry, and I'm indebted to Alan Moores who wrote in pointing me toward article Q151911 in the Microsoft Knowledge Base, on the subject of MS-DOS Compatibility Mode problems with PCI-IDE controllers. Lastly, the system BIOS figured in the emails on this subject. Steve Balaam kindly wrote in with this information:

'I also have an IBM K6-II 450 that forgot it had both CD-RW and DVD. The

solution was not to try to add them through Windows (it didn't work), but to go into the BIOS (F1 on bootup) and go to Advanced and select Load Default Settings. When I returned to Windows, magically the drives reappeared. Interestingly, before I selected default settings, both drives were correctly listed in the BIOS.'

It just goes to show how many possible solutions there can be to a problem, and why technical support can be so complicated these days. Lastly, Herbert Smith also wrote in with regard to Mr Hamam's modem disconnect, with some advice about taking care on how long those disconnect times are set for:

'The maximum setting for this is 99 minutes. Unfortunately, during software downloads my System decides that this is "time which may no longer be needed", gives 30 seconds' notice, then disconnects. The disconnection means that the download must be restarted, so Telstra loves it. It seems that 99 minutes is insufficient for many software downloads. I'm not an intensive user, consequently I try to run long downloads during my ISP's cheap time, so that I can leave the machine to look after itself while I go to do something more interesting. If Mr Hamam decides to set the "disconnect" option to any time, he should remember to de-couple it before downloading a software upgrade via Internet.'

Many thanks to you all for writing in.

A Indeed there is. To move the My Documents folder, right-click on the My Documents icon on your Active Desktop and select its Properties menu item. Fill in the details for the target folder or browse to it, and then hit the OK button.

I'd recommend making a backup copy of the contents of the My Documents folder (and subfolders) before you make any changes - it's always sensible to back up important data before you do anything that might endanger it in any way, and under Windows 2000 you'll actually be prompted to move the contents of the old folder to the new one. If you choose not to do so, and that wasn't what you intended, you'll find that they've all been hidden at the old location (though they don't

actually get deleted from there). Therefore, under Windows 2000, if you get it wrong you'll just have to bring up the Properties window for the folder again and select the Restore Default option to have My Documents move back to where it was originally located, thus restoring access to your files.

Windows 2000 Administrators might be interested to know that you can use folder redirection in Group Policies to change where My Documents appears on a network share, which is quite handy because then when your users save their files to their My Documents folder, they'll actually be saved at a location decided by you, ready for backup.

If you're wondering where the My

Documents info is stored in the Registry, it can be found at:

```
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Shell Folders
```

If you move the My Documents folder somewhere else on your system, the change is recorded at that entry, but a new entry is created at the following location:

```
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\User Shell Folders
```

That's important to know because if the redirection and change to My Documents

Readers' Tip 2

Unresponsive MSGSRV32

In Issue 38 (January 2001) the following question was asked by M Dingle:

'I run Windows 98 SE, and every time I restart my machine it stops responding after a variable amount of time. When I press <Ctrl-Alt-Del> to check the tasks that are running, it always states the MSGSRV32 is not responding. If I press the button to end this task, everything works fine again. I'd be very grateful if you could let me know what's going on.'

I gave a number of possible suggestions for this problem, and Nick Oldnall wrote in with this highly useful

information - I kicked myself because I'd forgotten that this had actually happened to me on a couple of occasions. Here's what he had to say:

'The problem usually occurs when the user tries to access programs before all the System Tray services have installed: the solution is to restart in Safe Mode, which resets the flag recording what's loaded into the System Tray. Next time, start in Normal Mode and it will be okay. Just let all disk activity finish before using Windows.'

Many thanks for that, Nick.

was carried out via a Group Policy implemented by a system administrator, the new path appears in this Registry key. However, the option to change the location of the My Documents folder will no longer be available to anyone right-clicking on the My Documents folder and selecting the Properties menu item.

Stop indexing

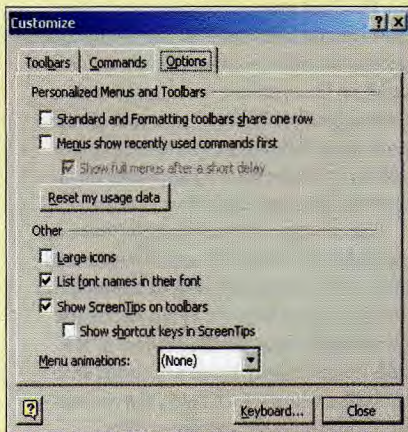
Q How do I stop the Office index program from running? I really don't need it running, it always chooses the worst moments and it just seems like a complete waste of time to me anyway. Can I delete it from the Start menu?

W Neighbour

A You don't want to just delete it from the Start menu, as quite apart from anything else it will leave you with a load of index files lying around on your hard disks that you won't be able to get space back from. I actually think you're wrong about the Find Fast indexer, and that once you've got rid of it you'll want to have it back. But if you're determined to remove it, do it in this order.

Start off by deleting all the Find Fast index files, thus:

Click the Start and select Settings | Control Panel. When Control Panel opens, look for the Find Fast icon and double-click on it to open it up. Look in the 'Index for documents in and below' list and delete each entry using 'Delete menu item' on the Index menu. When you've done that, go back to the Index menu and make sure that the 'Run when I log on' checkbox is cleared, and then click 'Close and Stop' on the Index menu.



A Get your full menus back in Office 2000 by checking out the Customisation area.

Off the menu

Q I've just installed Office 2000 and wish to be able to display all my menus again.

B Ians

A I must admit I found it quite disconcerting not to be able to see all the menu commands, and irritating when I found I was using the little scroll-down arrows all the time anyway, so I turned the feature off some time ago. To make your menus display their full set of options again, go to the Tools menu, click on it and select the Customize menu item. Click on the Options tab when the dialog opens, and look for a checkbox labelled 'Menus show recently used commands first'. Click in it to clear it and then close the dialog. You should now have all your menu items back.

Call me a CAB

Q I recall being able to view the contents of cab files just by double-clicking on them. Now, when I try to do that, nothing at all happens. How can I restore my system so that I can view the files again?

N Reliant

A You're correct in your recollections, Mr Reliant - you should be able to view the contents of Cabinet (Cab) files just by double-clicking on them. If you can't, Windows 98 must have lost its file association for them, stolen perhaps by another program on installation and not restored when it was uninstalled. Fortunately, it's easy to restore that association by following these steps:

- 1 Open Windows Explorer or My Computer, go to the View menu and select the Folder Options menu item.
- 2 Look for Cabinet in the Registered File Types list, select it and click on Edit, and then select the Open action and click on Edit again.
- 3 Look for an edit box labelled 'Application Used To Perform Action' and type the following in it:

```
explorer.exe /root,{0CD7A5C0-9F37-11CE-AB66-08002B2E1262},%1
```

- 4 Hit a lot of OK buttons to close the dialogs, and the Cabinet file viewing should be restored.

Random Clipboard

Q Could you explain how the Office 2000 Clipboard works? It seems to just jump up and down at random, and I can't fathom out what it's doing.

W Grendel

A My last Office question of the month, and a good one it is too, Mr Grendel. I found its habit of popping up and down disconcerting too, and determined to gain control over this unruly beast (and to find out why it was doing what it did). I should point out first of all that the Office Clipboard is actually rather useful, as unlike the Windows Clipboard it can hold up to 12 items so long as they don't exceed 4Mb in total. In order for it to be able to store those 12 items, the Office Clipboard has to be open on your Desktop and you can turn it on by selecting the Toolbars | Clipboard from the View menu.

As you've noticed, when you copy, the Office Clipboard will suddenly pop up on the Desktop, but in fact its appearance isn't quite as random as it might appear:

- If you copy the same item twice in a row, Clipboard will appear.

Dave's Tip

Restoring Windows 9x system files

There are occasions when you just have to say to yourself, 'Damn, I need to re-install Windows'. How long it takes you to get to that point usually depends on how patient you are and the nature of the problem you're dealing with. But if you don't fancy sitting through the whole install process, you might want to have a go at just re-installing the system files to see if that helps your case. Obviously, that happens anyway during a full re-install, but you can use the System File Checker tool (sfc.exe) to just replace any altered system files if you like. Bear in mind that your problems may have come from a bad program overwriting system files that it shouldn't have done, so while

doing this may stop a program from working, maybe it isn't a program you want to have on your system.

To use the System File Checker tool, simply follow these steps:

- 1 Head for the Start button, click on it, select the Programs menu item, then the Accessories menu item and then the System Tools menu item.
- 2 Next click on System Information and then select the System File Checker menu item on the Tools menu.
- 3 Select 'Scan For Altered Files', let it do the scan and then have it replace any with which it isn't happy.

I usually find that if neither of those options (SFC or a full re-install) works, a fresh install to a new Windows folder is going to be needed.

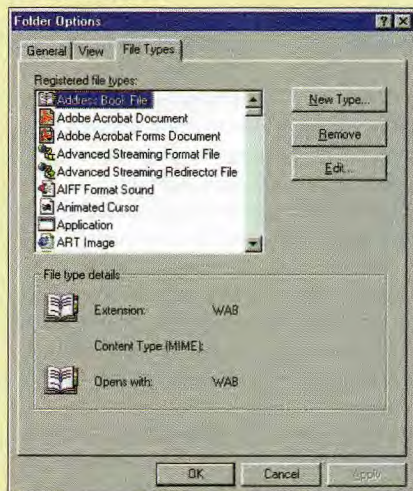
- If you cut or copy two items consecutively in the same Office program, it will appear.
- If you copy an item, paste it and then copy another item all within the same Office program, it will appear.

Once you have a full 12 items in it, if you try and copy another item, a message box will pop up and tell you that if you continue it will overwrite the first item that's currently in the Office Clipboard.

If you just close it each time it puts in an appearance, after the third occasion you'll be asked if you want it to stop popping up permanently, and if you opt to do that it won't bother you again.

To turn it back on, use View | Toolbars |

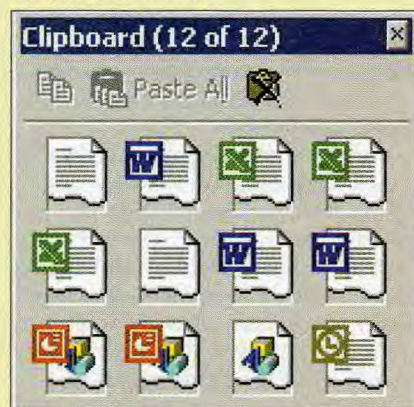
- 1 Can't get into the Cabinet? We'll soon sort your access.



Clipboard again. However, I've found that even if you do that it has a tendency to return at some point, so if you absolutely positively must get rid of it, then you're going to have to get down and dirty with the Registry. As usual, make all the necessary backups, then follow these steps, after ensuring that you've closed down any running programs: Head for the Start button, click on it, select the Run menu item, type regedit in the edit box and then hit the OK button.

- 1 Make your way to the key HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Office\9.0\Common\General
- 2 You now need to create a new entry, so head for the Edit menu, select the New menu item and then DWORD Value.
- 3 Select the default New Value #1 and

- 1 The Office Clipboard loaded up and ready to rock 'n' roll.



change it so that it reads AcbControl and hit the Enter key.

- 4 Go back to the Edit menu, select the Modify menu item and in the Edit DWORD Value dialog, click Decimal to select it, type 1 in the Value Data edit box and then hit the OK button.

- 5 Close the Registry Editor when you've finished. If you ever want to turn it back on again, just change the Value Data from 1 to 0.

Reliving old sites

Q I greatly enjoy reading your columns in *PC Authority magazine*. In the February 2001 edition (issue 39), where it talks about finding a list of all the pages you've ever visited on the net. How do I do this in Windows 98? There were some pages I found ages ago in my initial 'Gosh, wow' frenzy on the net and I'd love to go back.

H Davies

A I'd be quite surprised if there were, although it's always worth a look in your History folder, which you can access via the History button on the toolbar, by pressing the <Ctrl-H> key combination or via the slightly convoluted menu route View | Explorer Bar | History. If it's been quite some time, however, you'll almost certainly have lost those URLs, as they're only kept in History for as long as is specified in your Internet Explorer options. To see what that says, head for the Tools menu, click on it, select the Options menu item and have a look at the bottom frame, labelled History.

You'll see a figure there for the number of days items are kept in History. If the URLs you wanted are gone, you might be able to find them by searching in the Files area.

Go to the frame above History, click on the Settings button and then on the View Files button. If you have a lot of items in there, it will take some time to load. In there you'll find hundreds, indeed thousands, of entries for all the items you've seen on Web pages as you've browsed them. You might find a search through there to be fruitful, albeit somewhat long-winded, even given the sorting capabilities available.



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