

Compiled by Mark W. Kaelin

Takeaway

The Windows XP PowerToys are set of applications and utilities that you can download and install for free from Microsoft.

PowerToys

The Windows XP PowerToys are set of applications and utilities that you can download and install for free from Microsoft. They are not officially part of the operating system, but Microsoft makes them available as enhancements to the released product. In many cases, the functionality they provide is something that should have been available in Windows all along, but for some reason is not. As such, many of the Power Toys should be considered essential to the proper functioning of the OS. Here is a list of 10 of the more useful free utilities you can download at the [Windows XP Power Toys site](#).

Note

Keep in mind that while Microsoft ensures that the PowerToys for Windows XP work as described, it stops short of guaranteeing the package. Furthermore, the toys aren't officially supported by Microsoft, which means that Microsoft Technical Support won't answer questions on problems with the PowerToys.

Table A

<u>PowerToys</u>	<u>Description</u>
Tweak UI	This utility allows you access to various user interface options and settings not available in the normal Windows XP control panel, like mouse and taskbar settings.
Clear Type Tuner	This utility helps you tune the shape and width of the fonts on your screen to better match your particular eye using ClearType Technology. This is a must for anyone with less than perfect vision.
Alt-Tab Replacement	For many power users the Alt-Tab keyboard shortcut for switching between running applications is a vital part of their interaction with Windows XP. Besides showing the icon of the application being switched to, this Alt-Tab Replacement Power Toy adds a thumbnail preview of what the window looks like making the switch that more intuitive.
Image Resizer	Whether you are dealing with digital photographs of your children's birthday party or screenshots for a million-dollar presentation, there will come a time when you will want to change the size of an image. This utility places that functionality in the right-click menu for any image file you can access through Windows Explorer.
SyncToy	The newest Windows XP PowerToy is the SyncToy , which was released in August 2005. This utility lets you synchronize two file folders on the same PC or different PC's across a network.
RAW Image Thumbnailer and Viewer	With this feature addition to Windows Explorer you can manipulate images in the RAW format as easily as you can JPEG or GIF images. The RAW format is the default format produced by most digital cameras.
Open Command Window Here	Sometimes you just can't get around it—sometimes you need to use a command line to do a job and do it right. This little utility will open a command line prompt in the selected directory rather than the root directory, which is the default.
Power Calculator	While the calculator app that ships with Windows XP is adequate for basic math calculations, you will often find yourself looking for some additional functionality. The Power Calculator provides those additional features including functions, graphing, precision settings, and basic, but useful, conversions.
Virtual Desktop Manager	Power users tend to have numerous applications running at the same time. During a major project for example, the number of applications running can be difficult to manage. With the Virtual Desktop Manager PowerToy you can create up to four separate virtual desktops, each with its own set of running applications. This powerful tool can help you manage your time and increase your overall efficiency.
HTML and CD Slide Show Wizard	This last tool is really two separate PowerToys that do the same thing, only in different places. These slide show wizards help you set up an image gallery as a basic slide show on either a CD-ROM or in HTML. This handy utility is good for automating simple presentations that don't need the extra features available in PowerPoint for example.

Installation

Installing the PowerToys for Windows XP is easy. Double-click the PowerToySetup.exe installation file, and the install wizard will begin the procedure. When you get to the Setup Type page, you can choose either the Complete or Custom setup options.



Additional resources

- **Subscribe to TechRepublic's [Downloads RSS Feed](#) [XML](#)**
- Sign up for TechRepublic's [Downloads Weekly Update newsletter](#)
- Sign up for TechRepublic's [Windows XP](#) newsletter
- Check out all of TechRepublic's [free newsletters](#)
- [50+ keyboard shortcuts for moving faster in Windows XP](#)
- [Take control of Windows XP system properties during both startup and shutdown](#)
- [Tech Tips for Windows XP Professional, Second Edition: Backup and Recovery chapter](#)

Version history

Version: 1.0

Published: September 21, 2005

Tell us what you think

TechRepublic downloads are designed to help you get your job done as painlessly and effectively as possible. Because we're continually looking for ways to improve the usefulness of these tools, we need your feedback. Please take a minute to [drop us a line](#) and tell us how well this download worked for you and offer your suggestions for improvement.

Thanks!

—The TechRepublic Downloads Team