

Tips 'n Technology

POINTS OF INTEREST:

Friday Online - 03/24/06
PowerPoint Tips N Tricks

Fine-Tune Your Searches!
See page 2 for more info...

Alphabetize Favorites
See page 3 for more info...



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Bytes & Pieces

TExAS–The Transition Experience by Larry Lippke

The past two months' use of the Texas Extension Accountability System have certainly created a learning experience for all of us. With such a significant change in how Extension faculty document plans and then submit reports to those plans, the transition has been "interesting." Likely you have other words to describe it. We have received both positive and negative feedback from you about both the philosophical concept behind the system, as well as the technical operation of it. Yet, we continue to strive to improve the system based on your experience and suggestions. So, while some of your feedback may be critical, we welcome it; please continue.

In case you are interested in trivia, the TExAS database currently contains 5,383 plans and 45,272 planned tasks. Through the first two months of reporting, you have submitted 30,097 task reports and 15,490 individual contact reports. Still, there remain some loose ends which require your assistance in cleaning up. For example, 276 people have not yet selected a supervisor in their profiles. There are 364 plans which have never been submitted for approval. There are also 321 plans which have been submitted for approval, but the supervisor has not granted that approval.

We, as well, have some things to clean up to make the system operate more smoothly. We are replacing the server and will hopefully have it in place before April 1. We are adding additional retrieval options and trying to streamline the use of the ones we already have. We will be implementing some changes to the way recurring tasks are handled, allowing more flexibility, along with the ability to copy tasks. And, we are looking for ways to make reporting much more efficient, particularly for multi-person tasks. Over the next couple of months, we will also be more formally seeking your feedback and suggestions through a statewide survey.

There are more changes to the system to come as we strive to improve its performance and its usefulness. Thanks for your help and patience.

News and Updates

The Brazos Valley Macromedia Users Group - Summer Wilson

The Brazos Valley Macromedia User's Group will meet on March 28th from 11:45 to 1:00pm at MicroAge in College Station. For more information visit <http://bvmmug.tamu.edu>.

The Brazos Valley Web Guild - Summer Wilson

The Brazos Valley Web Guild will meet on April 7, 2006. For more information visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bvweb/>.

Centra Central

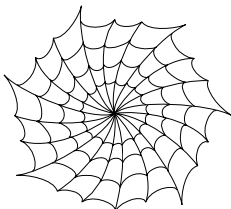
Friday Online Topics for March:

03/24/06 - Power Point Tips and Tricks

03/31/06 - Distance Education--Development Tools

Enroll or browse upcoming events or learn more about Centra by clicking the Centra Symposium link from the EIT webpage or going directly to <http://eit.tamu.edu/centra.html>. Playback any of the 100+ recorded sessions from the Public Recordings link at <http://centra.tamu.edu/main/tce>.

Web Info



Possible URLs to link from your Websites this Month

FCS - Better Budgeting - <http://www.betterbudgeting.com/>

AG and Natural Resource - Jackson & Perkins® Garden Inspired Living - <http://www.jacksonandperkins.com>

4H - The Second Harvest anti-hunger organization - <http://www.secondharvest.org>

Better Searching Using Boolean - by Jill Hughson

Have you ever needed to search for information on the Internet and ended up going through a list of hundreds of web pages that do not provide relevant material? How can you narrow the scope of a search? The easiest way is to use Boolean operators in your search criteria.

What are **Boolean operators**? The most common operator is AND. Let's say you were searching for information about the Wizard of Oz. You might go to Google™ and enter the search criteria "wizard of oz." What you get is 13,100,000 results. What if you really only wanted information about Toto? Using the Boolean operator AND in your search could help narrow it down. For example "wizard of oz" AND "Toto" as the search criteria returns 473,000 results. That's significantly lower amount than the first search on just "wizard of oz." Other Boolean operators include NEAR, NOT, and OR. You can use the words or the corresponding symbols for these operators to refine searches.

- * AND is the same as & (and also the same as +)
- * OR is the same as |
- * NOT is the same as ! (and also the same as -)
- * NEAR is the same as ~

Let's change the search to one for lions, tigers, and bears. If you search for lions AND tigers AND bears, you get results that contain all of the keywords, no matter where they are in relation to each other on the page. Using NEAR in place of AND returns results where the keywords are usually within 10 to 20 words of each other. If you wanted information about lions or tigers, but not bears you would write your search phrase just like that - lions OR tigers NOT bears. Using OR returns a list of all the pages that mention lions, plus all the pages that mention tigers, and will also include all the pages that mention both. When you use NOT in the search phrase, the list throws out any pages that contain that keyword. So in this case, our search phrase lions OR tigers NOT bears would return a list of pages containing the keywords lions and/or tigers, but not bears. There is no limit to how you can combine the operators to expand or refine your search.

Somewhat related to this is the use of **quotation marks** for your search phrases. When you put items of a search phrase within quotation marks, you are telling the search engine that you want to find only those pages that contain all of the items of the search phrase in the order shown within the quotation marks. So a search on lions and tigers would result in pages that just contain both keywords; however a search on "lions and tigers" results in pages that contain the exact phrase "lions and tigers" in that order.

So have fun and use AND, OR, NOT, NEAR, and quotation marks to make your searching more specific, with fewer but more useful results.

Tip of the Month: Alphabetizing Favorites/Bookmarks by Jeffrey SoRelle

Best Kept Microsoft Secret, Alphabetizing Your Favorites

With Firefox alphabetizing your bookmarks is as easy as clicking on **Bookmarks > Manage Bookmarks > View**, and you can sort by just about anything. Internet Explorer (IE), well it is not that straight forward, and your options are pretty limited. Limited meaning, pretty much you have one choice, and it is not real obvious how to even exercise that choice. This tip will show you alphabetize your Favorites in IE.

1. Start Internet Explorer
2. Left-click on the Favorites menu (Figure 1)
3. Right-click on the first link or folder
4. A popup menu will appear - select **Sort by Name** (Figure 2)
5. Congrats, you have now alphabetized the first level of links and folders in IE.

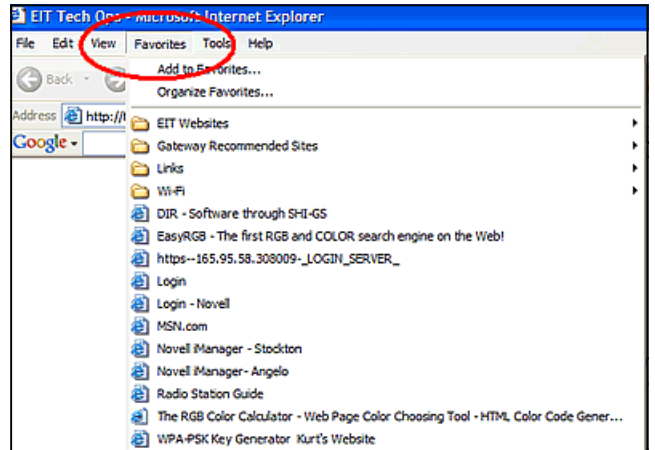


Figure 1

To alphabetize links inside folders:

1. Left-click on the Favorites menu
2. Select and move the mouse into the folder you want to alphabetize
3. Right-click anywhere in that list
4. A popup menu will appear - select **Sort by Name**

Note - To alphabetize other folders, work your way down the list of folders and repeat this process.

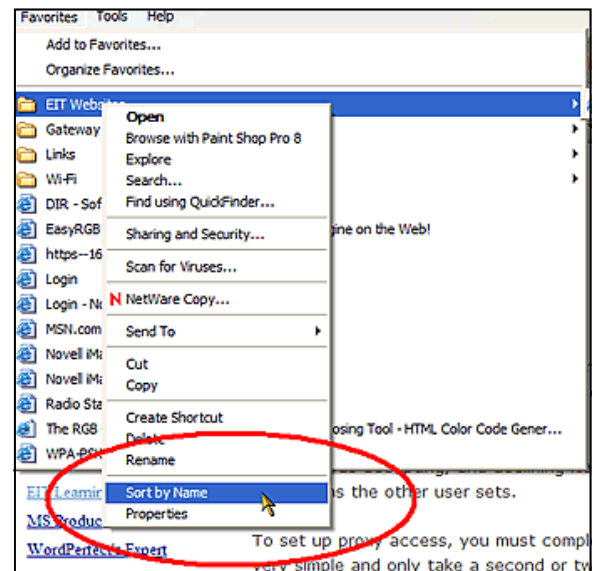


Figure 2

Tip - Try this on other menus in Windows (e.g. Start menu, Firefox bookmarks, Netscape bookmarks, etc.)