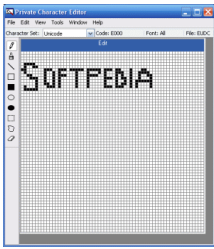


15 January 2007

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Hidden Windows XP Applications

They have been there from the beginning...

Windows XP is full of surprises even years later after the initial release and while Vista is trying to eat up all the computer users. Every day, users (not advanced ones) continue to learn and discover new Windows XP features by mistakes or from tips and tricks sites similar with our service. I bet you proclaim yourself an advanced user but you still have a lot to learn about the Microsoft offspring. One of the explications might be that we intensively work with computers every day, using Windows, but doing relatively routine tasks, we might not come over all the features, tricks and options. That's why I am here to supply you with tricks and information for a better acquaintance with Windows XP. In this article, we will see together four hidden applications that are installed by default in Windows XP. Do not think of hidden as of a term for something that is meant not to be found but as of a word that describes, in our case, something that, because of its location, cannot be easily seen and used. Where are these mysterious utilities? Just browse the system partition and go to Windows > System32. In that folder, there is a lot of stuff including Windows commands. But we are not interested in commands, we need applications. Well, the "hidden applications" have icons assigned while windows commands use only the standard command icon. You can search the entire folder for applications using this as keyword *.exe or *.com. Not all the applications found are from Microsoft. To verify that, you can check the "about" information. What did I find interesting? **Compact.exe** - A nice tool designed to permit the user to compress files or folders. This application acts like a command line and uses parameters to run. If you type compact.exe at command prompt, you will get information about the status of the current directory, whether it is compressed or not. To use it, you need to add parameters that can be found by typing compact.exe /? **Cipher.exe** - Enables you to secure your computer by wiping the data. If someone manages to take control of your computer, he might recover deleted data from your HDD. Cipher gives you a hand by permanently deleting the data in order not to be recovered after. As the application described before, you can obtain more information about how can be handled using the help -> cipher.exe /? **Character map** - here is a friendly and useful application that can save you a lot of trouble. When typing in a simple text editor or on messenger you do not have access at special characters. To avoid looking for the desired character in older text files or starting an advanced word processor, you can easily use the Character Map. If the application is not present via the System Tools menu from the Start -> Accessories, you can type Charmap.exe at run menu to open it. And because we were talking about characters let's continue this track and meet the **Private Character Editor** which will let you create your own character. To open the application go to Start > Run and type eudcedit.exe. These are just a few examples of applications that can be found inside the System32 folder. Try as many as you can to see which is suitable for your needs.