

Stupid Windows XP Tricks

Get rid of Messenger

If you have Windows XP installed on your computer, you undoubtedly have Windows Messenger imposing itself on your desktop and in your system tray. Why-oh-why can't we uninstall Messenger, or at least prevent it from starting up every time Windows starts up?

For the longest time, I thought it was nearly impossible to uninstall without going through some complicated "registry hack". Well, here is the inside tip on how to uninstall those Windows components that we thought were un-installable.

XP has a SETUP INFORMATION FILE that controls what appears in the Windows Component Wizard. If you edit this file, you can remove these components as you would any others.

To start, use Notepad or another text editor to open the SETUP INFORMATION FILE, *sysoc.inf*, which is generally found in the *\WINDOWS\INF* folder. Look for the line describing the program that you want to uninstall. Lines in the file have the format: `program=dll.inf entry, OcEntry, program.inf entry, numeral`.

Programs that are un-installable all have the word `hide` or `HIDE` embedded in the string. Next, delete the word `HIDE` from the entry that refers to the component that you want to remove. For example, if you wanted to remove Pinball, you'd edit its entry by changing `Pinball=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,pinball.inf,HIDE,7` to `Pinball=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,pinball.inf,,7`

Save the *sysoc.inf* file, then run the Windows Component Wizard by choosing **ADD OR REMOVE PROGRAMS** from **CONTROL PANEL**, and clicking on **ADD/ REMOVE WINDOWS COMPONENTS**. The component will now show up in the wizard. Remove it as you would any other component.

Keep in mind that not all of the entries in *sysoc.inf* are as easy to understand as Pinball and WordPad. For example, if you want to remove Windows Messenger, edit the entry for `mmsgs`, and if you want to remove the Accessibility Wizard, edit the entry for `AccessOpt`. The following table lists the "un-installable" programs and what their entries are in the *sysoc.inf* file.

Entry	What Entry Refers To
AccessOpt	Accessibility Wizard
MultiM	Multimedia components, including Media Player, Volume Control, and Sound Recorder
CommApps	Communications components, including Chat, Hyperterminal, and Phone Dialer

AutoUpdate	Windows Automatic Update
TerminalServer	Terminal Server
Dtc	Distributed Transaction Coordinator
Com	COM+
WBEM	Windows Management Instrumentation
Pinball	Pinball game
MSWordPad	WordPad
msmsgs	Windows Messenger